This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

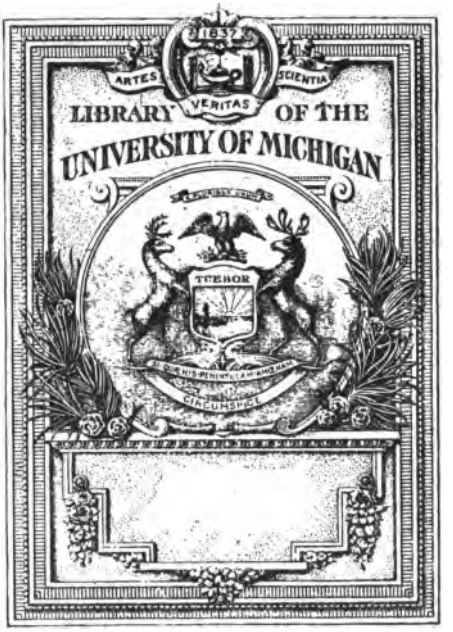
a39015 00028059 7b

OF

RUSSIA

M. ALEXANDER SCHWARTZ

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

DK
266
.S4

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE VOICE OF RUSSIA

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

JESSIE M. SCHWARTZ, SHORTLY BEFORE HER DEATH

Digitized by Google

DEATH

THE VOICE OF RUSSIA

BY

M. ALEXANDER SCHWARTZ

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE

Digitized by Google

Copyright, 1921,
By E. P. Dutton & Company

All Rights Reserved

PRINTED IN THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA

Digitized by Google

(1870
30
59

69-18-21 N.W.

FOREWORD

MR. M. A. SCHWARTZ, an American Socialist from San Francisco, an active member of the American Federation of Labor and an organizer for the Amalgamated Street Railways of America, went to Bolshevist Russia on April 24, 1920, together with his wife, a prominent Socialist worker, member of the Executive Board of the Socialist Party of the State of California, known under the name of Jessie M. Molle.

Both Mr. Schwartz and his wife went to Russia as sympathizers with Bolshevism. They spent about seven months in Russia and studied closely the conditions not only in Moscow and Petrograd, but also Tambov, Tula, Nizhni-Novgorod, Kazan, Samara and many other important centers. As the result of their close study of the Bolshevist régime, and after many uncensored conversations with Russian workingmen and peasants, they came

381945

6-13 34.

Digitized by Google

to the conclusion that the Bolshevist rule which they thought to be a realization of Socialism, the highest state of democracy, is in reality the worst tyranny possible. They did not hesitate to express their views frankly to the Bolshevist leaders and to the Second Congress of the Third International, and were arrested by the famous "Extraordinary Commission" and thrown into prison. They spent four months in the Bolshevist prison under most terrible conditions. Mrs. Schwartz died as the result of these experiences. Mr. Schwartz survived them and has undertaken the task of acquainting the American people with the actual conditions in Bolshevist Russia.

Mr. Schwartz was born in Odessa, Southern Russia, near the Black Sea, in 1870. After living thirty-five years in Russia, he came to this country in 1906. While in this country he participated actively in the Labor and the Socialist movements.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	We Go to Free Russia	1
II.	Petrograd and Emma Goldman	16
III.	Moscow Revisited	34
IV.	Worthless Money and Human Suffering	58
V.	Soldiers of the Red Army	79
VI.	Communism Along the Volga	97
VII.	We Visit Tula and Tolstoi's Home	121
VIII.	Life in Moscow	143
IX.	The Third International—We Are Arrested	157
X.	Prison Life	180
XI.	Freedom—The Final Sacrifice	202

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ILLUSTRATIONS

JESSIE M. SCHWARTZ, SHORTLY BEFORE HER DEATH *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

M. ALEXANDER SCHWARTZ 20

PAUL LEVI, A GERMAN DELEGATE AND A MEMBER OF THE REICHSTAG 52

NIKOLAI LENIN, HEAD OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT 52

TYPES OF SOAP USED IN RUSSIA, ILLUSTRATING CLASS DISTINCTIONS 68

LUNACHARSKY, MINISTER OF EDUCATION . . . 124

G. ZINOVIEV, PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALE . 124

BELA KUN, ONCE DICTATOR OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT 140

MADAME BALABANOVA, ORATOR OF THE PROPAGANDA BUREAU, OUR GUIDE ON THE VOLGA . . 140

PETROGRAD. THE GREAT SOVIET PAGEANT ON THE STEPS OF THE OLD EXCHANGE, JULY 19, 1920 . 164

SYLVIA PANKHURST, THE FAMOUS ENGLISH SUFFRAGIST, A DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS . . . 204

JOHN REED AS HE APPEARED TO A RUSSIAN ARTIST 204

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE VOICE OF RUSSIA

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE VOICE OF RUSSIA

CHAPTER I

WE GO TO FREE RUSSIA

IT is my hope in publishing this book that I may be able to give the world, and especially the people of the United States, a vivid impression of the harsh realities of life in Soviet Russia today. It is inconceivable that the people of this fortunate land will be unable to bring some relief to the suffering millions of what was once a great and powerful nation. Since I am not a writer by profession, I must tell my story as best I can, but if in my halting phrases you are able to understand the depths into which Russia has fallen, I will consider that my task has been sufficiently rewarded.

I am a Russian by birth, as were my father and forefathers; I was educated in Russia and lived there until I was thirty-five years of age. Until my eighteenth year I lived in Odessa, perhaps the most beautiful city of Russia,

Digitized by Google

where I was born in 1870, graduating from one of the city high schools, or gymnazia. My memories of the old vanished Russia are keen enough, and include practically every city of importance in the country. After I left Odessa, I was a commercial traveler for a wholesale jewelry factory for three years, and traveled through the length and breadth of the land, from Siberia to the Baltic, and came into contact with every type of Russian, with the *muzhik* as well as the tradesmen of the towns.

When I reached the age of twenty-one, I was forced to join the army, as in Russia there was compulsory military service. I did not enter the army willingly, though my reason was not that of most of the young conscripts of my day, for I came from a military caste, my father and my grandfather having been soldiers of the empire. My father served under Alexander the Second as an officer, but in 1877, impressed by the suffering caused by the Turkish-Russian war, he took an active part in the Nihilist movement, and when the Russian Government discovered this through their spies, he was secretly arrested and shot.

Digitized by Google

I was then too young to realize the significance of this, but when I grew older my mother told me one day what had been his fate.

Naturally, when I joined the army myself, I was not over-loyal, knowing as I did, that I had become a part of the great machine that had killed my father. It was not long before the Nihilists seized upon me as a convert, although I understood very little of the aims of their mysterious organization. At first, I was anxious to learn and I absorbed their doctrines readily enough, with the result that I had soon become an active Nihilist myself. In 1891, when my turn of compulsory military service had been completed, I re-enlisted, partly because I liked the life, and because as a soldier I could best serve the cause to which I was devoted. For fourteen years I occupied different positions under the Russian Government, but my Nihilistic activities were eventually discovered, and I was arrested one day in Petrograd and banished to Siberia.

From the first I determined to escape, and aided by the underground system that took

Digitized by Google

so many political prisoners out of Siberia, I made my way in disguise and with a great deal of hardship, back to European Russia and Moscow. There I purchased a passport under another name, for at that time the sale of false passports was a regular business, and with it I managed to make my way through the Prussian border and eventually to the United States by way of Hamburg and New York. The secret society of which I was a member gave me money for the trip out of their funds which had been secured for propaganda. Curiously enough, the money for the escape of political prisoners and for propaganda abroad was supplied to most of these societies by wealthy Russians who believed in a change of government and in revolution, but were unwilling to take any active part in the movement.

In the officers' training school in the old days, I had listened to talks by the officers of the General Staff, and was particularly impressed by their description of life in California. So I went West immediately upon my arrival in America and secured work on

Digitized by Google

the street railway system of San Francisco. I soon became active in the Labor movement as an organizer for the Amalgamated Street Railways of the United States, of which W. Mahon is the National President. I was a member of Division No. 192 of the Street Car Men's Union in Oakland.

When war broke out in 1914, I left the organization and spoke to workmen's gatherings throughout the United States. To thousands of workmen I told the story of the despotism of the Czar's régime. But when the revolution broke out in that country and Nicholas the Second was displaced by Kerensky, I became a strong supporter of the new government, and from my hatred of the old order of things, put my whole heart and soul into the effort to get the support of the people of this country for the new Socialist Government of Russia. When the Bolshevists came into power I left my platform work, went West again, and together with my wife, worked there for the Socialist movement.

My wife, Jessie Molle, was an American, born in Portage, Wisconsin, and a graduate

Digitized by Google

of the University of Wisconsin. She became interested in Socialism while she was in college, and would often address meetings in Chicago. She joined the Socialist Party in 1892 and became very active in the movement, particularly in California, where she was for many years on the State Executive Board. My wife also worked for the Nationalist Socialist Party at their headquarters in Chicago under Otto Brandstadter, and became a well-known speaker, lecturing for the party and collecting money for it, from San Francisco to New York.

Jessie Schwartz gave her whole life to the cause in which she believed, and in the end she died for that cause, in Reval, on the borders of Russia, thousands of miles from her home and from her children, another martyr to the despotism that has developed there under the name of the government of the working people. It is the story of her heroism and of her suffering that I wish to tell you.

In 1919, the convention of the Socialists of the United States at Chicago was stampeded

Digitized by Google

and split, and there were thus founded another party, commonly known as the Communist Party, which the late John Reed and many older and more prominent Socialists joined. The newly made Communists returned to their respective states and succeeded in capturing for a time the property, the press and the funds of the Socialist organization. My wife, unwilling to change her convictions, fought bitterly against them, but I myself was in favor of the ideals of Communism, endorsing the action of the new Communist Party. It was finally decided that the Socialist Party, as a whole, would affiliate with the Third International of Russia, and the decision to do so was carried by a substantial majority.

For the first time in our married life, my wife and I found that we disagreed with each other fundamentally. Finally, my wife, too, decided to give up her work with the Socialist Party, for which she had labored for over eighteen years, and when I asked her why she was doing this, she said, "Because the Socialist Party in America does not understand Bolshevism." Many days and nights

Digitized by Google

we talked together about this Socialism for which we had both worked so long in America and this new sort of Socialism in Russia, of which we read so many contradictory reports. It was becoming so big a problem in our lives, that I finally proposed to her that we should go to Russia together to find out what "Communism" might mean to the working people of the world. We decided to obtain the approval and endorsement of the Socialist Party for our project, since our whole object in going would be to satisfy ourselves as to the truth and report it to our own people on our return. Leaving our home in California, we went to the National Headquarters in Chicago, where the leaders of the Party told us that it would be an immense help to them if we should go, although they had no funds available for sending us. We were given credentials, letters and resolutions from the Socialists of America, besides personal letters to Tchicherin, Zinoviev and Lenin.

We applied for passports for Europe, without stating that our ultimate aim was Russia, and on April 24, 1920, we left on the Maure-

Digitized by Google

tania. To us it seemed the beginning of a pilgrimage. As the Mohammedan goes to Mecca, so we turned our faces toward this new government, founded, as we thought, for the interests of the common working man for whom we had both labored for so long. Perhaps the reader will appreciate how much it meant to us, when I say that for the trip I had drawn out of the bank practically all of the savings that we had reserved for our old age—and I was then fifty-one and my wife was not far behind. It is difficult for me to describe my wife's delight when she found herself actually on the way. She told me later that these were the happiest days of her life, as they were indeed of mine. I am sure that she felt that there was something sacred to her in this first voyage of hers across the Atlantic.

On our arrival in London, we saw the leaders of the English Socialist Party and the trades unions, and visited the Labor Council in London, where we addressed a meeting and told our audience that we were going to Russia to investigate conditions under the Bol-

Digitized by Google

shevist Government. They approved of our mission and we were made honorary members of the British Labor Party and were given letters to the Russian Government. From there we went to Germany, through Holland, and managed to hide the letters relating to our visit to Russia when we were searched on the border. We remained in Berlin for two weeks and had an interview with the President, Herr Ebert, and with General Noske. We also attended the Reichstag and visited the headquarters of the Labor Unions and the Communist groups centered in Berlin, and were given more letters to the Russian Government.

I did not believe then that there was any justification for the part that General Noske had taken in the arrest and death of Liebknecht. We were invited to Madame Liebknecht's house for dinner, where we talked with her until late at night. It was a sad evening. The poor woman was pathetically shaken by the death of her husband and was bitter against Noske and the other officials who, she said, had decreed his death. She

Digitized by Google

cried when she said that Carl had been killed in cold blood and without any justification. She said that while his enemies declared themselves Socialists, they were really devoted to capitalism, and that her husband and Rosa Luxembourg and countless others had been done away with because these Socialists feared that the working people might take possession of the country and establish a government for the people. Liebknecht's influence must have been tremendous. She described the great meetings at which he had presided, and said that thousands had cheered him on the streets wherever he appeared. She showed us letters that she had received, stating that if she took any active part in the threatened revolution her son would have the same fate as his father. She had decided to keep what little life had left her and retire from the movement, living quietly at home and looking after her children.

On the following day I bought some flowers and on Sunday we went to the cemetery where Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg were buried, in the midst of other revolutionists who had been killed, and we decorated all their

Digitized by Google

graves in honor of the two leaders of the Communist cause. Thirty-two others, men and women, were buried in the same spot, and my poor wife cried bitterly as she put in her note-book the names of the dead, with the dates of their death.

The next day we left for Russia. We should have traveled through Poland, but at that moment Poland was at war with Russia, and since my sympathies were with the Bolshevist Government, I did not feel it right to pay 500 German marks to the Polish Government for my visé. Accordingly, we took the trip by sea, traveling from Stettin to Königsburg. The boat was so packed with passengers, that it was impossible to find room to sit. We were both sick and suffered terribly during the twenty-four hours of the trip. Finally, after much hardship, and after the usual tiresome delays for innumerable visits to crowded consulates, we arrived at Reval.

The town was packed with visitors, prosperous traders, homeless refugees and penniless exiles, and we were unable to find any rooms. Most of the people were, like ourselves, wait-

Digitized by Google

ing to get into Russia; others had fled from there and were just waiting and waiting for whatever fate might have in store for them in the future. Eventually, we had to find a place for ourselves in the already crowded railway station. They are all alike—those stations of Eastern Europe—packed with men, women and children, the crippled, the sick, and the well, clinging together on the dirty floors as if a gigantic bee-hive had been overturned. But at least it was better than the open air, and although still suffering from our journey, we endured the discomforts and the sour odor of tobacco and humanity as best we might. The next morning we looked for rooms again, wandering around from one house to another. Finally, we noticed an automobile which carried the American flag, and found it belonged to the Secretary of the American Y. M. C. A. at Reval, a Mr. Gott. We told him that we were Americans and that we had been unable to find quarters. His reply was very like the man.

"Don't worry," he said, "I will fix you up."

He certainly did so, for he gave us one of

Digitized by Google

the finest rooms that we had during our journey, and even found food for us, refusing to let me pay him for it.

Esthonia was the first government to recognize the Soviet Government, and the Russian Commissars occupied a whole building in Reval, which they called the Hotel Petrograd. I sent word of our presence to the representatives of the Bolshevist Government, and finally went to see the Secretary of the Consul. We showed him our letters from the various Socialist parties, and resolutions and other documents that had been given us for the Russian Government, and he asked us dozens of questions which we answered in an apparently satisfactory manner. But nevertheless he told us that in spite of our credentials we would have to wait in Reval until orders came from the Commissar of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. But he assured us that this would not take very long, as our papers were in good order and that he had already had word that we were on our way into Russia.

We met a few Americans in the same building, also trying to get permission to enter the

Digitized by Google

country, and a great many motion picture operators. Two of them, a Mr. Estes and Mr. Frick, told me that they had been waiting for over a month and had about decided to turn back again. Later on I heard that they had finally made their way over the border, but that they had been arrested by the Extraordinary Commission on the day they went into Moscow, and when I left that city in December, they were still in prison.

Russia today is like a quicksand. You see a man walking forward with confidence on what seems to be a firm earth, and suddenly without a struggle, he sinks from sight and is lost—perhaps forever.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

PETROGRAD AND EMMA GOLDMAN

A TELEGRAM came a week later from Moscow, from Tchicherin, Commissar of Foreign Affairs, ordering us to proceed at once. A special car was attached to the only daily train from Reval to Petrograd, for my wife, myself and the courier, whose ostensible duty was to escort guests of the Government into Russia. We were both as excited as a pair of children, my wife even more than I, for she had about given up hope—indeed, she was so much elated, that in the confusion she allowed some needy gentleman to relieve her of her pocketbook and gloves. When we came to the Russian frontier, I was anxious to get my first glimpse of the Red Army—that extraordinary army of revolutionaries which has become the greatest armed force in Europe. Finally the train stopped alongside of a group

Digitized by Google

of soldiers with red ribbons on their shoulders, the typical stalwart, unkempt private of Russia. They might have been brothers of the men I had drilled years ago. To express my enthusiasm, I snatched a red necktie from my valise and waved it wildly out of the window.

One of the soldiers smiled, and now I think I know what that smile meant. It was not one of mere welcome. Perhaps he was thinking, "Wait till you come back this way, my friend. If you are glad to see me then, it will be because you are headed in another direction."

After we had passed the border, we stopped frequently to load up with wood for the engine, since there is no coal available for the railroads, and in many places we noticed that the heavy labor of loading the logs into the tender was done by young women. My wife was astounded, since she had never seen women performing this sort of work before, and I think that her first feeling of disillusionment of Russia's Government of the Proletariat, came then. She remarked that she could not understand why the railroad Soviets permitted

Digitized by Google

these girls to do hard manual labor. I tried to talk with some of the girls, asking them why they worked in this way and what pay they received for it, but the courier who was with us always managed to interrupt our conversation and to get me away from them. In fact, I began to suspect that he was more of a guard than a courier.

We stopped for half an hour at one station, and in an effort to shake off this too friendly companion, I walked about the platform. A group of people had collected around our carriage and were apparently discussing us. Since they did not know that I could speak Russian, I stood near them and listened. There I caught the first whisper of the discontent that is being uttered in every corner of Russia, a discontent that is pathetic because it seems hopeless, but that may some day end in a blaze of anger which will throw down everything before it.

"Tchicherin lets two foreigners have a special car to themselves," one man was saying in a discontented voice, "two of them in a whole car, while we who are Russians have

Digitized by Google

to travel in freight car packed in like sardines. What do people who are looked after as if they were children of the Czar know about conditions in Russia? When they get back what have they to write in their foolish books but 'There is plenty to eat; they stuffed us like pigs, and we traveled like princes and lived in palaces.' If the fools could only talk Russian they might learn something, but even then no one would dare to do any more than ask one of them for a cigarette."

I faced them suddenly. "What is that you are saying about being afraid to talk to me?"

"Are you a Russian?" somebody asked. "We thought you were English."

"I am a Russian," I said, "but I haven't been here for fifteen years. I have come to find out everything that I can."

They burst into a chorus of voluble complaints. One man said he had been robbed of everything but his life in his home village. Soldiers had descended upon it one day and had taken his grain, burned his house, killed one of his brothers, and had taken him away with them. Now he had to work on the rail-

Digitized by Google

way under dreadful conditions with hardly enough to eat to keep him alive. Another man in a torn army coat, said that he would freeze when next winter came, as all of his clothes had been taken, and that it was impossible to save enough money to get more clothes. He had to buy extra bread with anything he had left or see his wife starve.

"The survival of the fittest," I thought gloomily, "or rather the survival of the leanest."

The interpreter who had been out of sight for a few moments, now caught sight of me, and as he hurried toward me the big group suddenly melted away. But later on I was able to get a few words with some of the train crew, one of whom, an intelligent man, had been a conductor on another route before the Revolution. He spoke bitterly of the appalling change in his life. He used to live comfortably on 150 roubles a month. Now he received an allowance of a common laborer, 3500 roubles, worth about a dollar in actual purchasing power, besides the usual insufficient rations, and both he and his family were always

Digitized by Google

M. ALEXANDER SCHWARTZ

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

on the verge of starvation. He tried to impress on me his indignation at the general neglect of the railroads—the great confusion into which a once orderly system had fallen.

"From Reval, only one train a day, and that is packed to suffocation—and I hear that everywhere else it is just as bad. And I must go on," he said, "for I must somehow live."

Finally another man came up, who proved to be a genuine Communist. "Don't listen to him," he said. "He is really a 'bourjou' (bourgeois). I know more about conditions than he does and I tell you that it is not the Government's fault. They are doing the best they can."

I shook hands with him and returning to our car gave him a new pair of shoes, overjoyed to find a good Bolshevist. The man looked at me in a startled way for a moment, for later I found out that shoes are enormously expensive in Russia. He felt, I presume, as I would at home if a stranger had suddenly given me his pocketbook stuffed with bills.

"But I have nothing to give you in return," he said. "I have no money." I told him that

Digitized by Google

I had two more pairs and that I did not need them.

"Not need them!" he cried. "Good God!" and he suddenly rushed away. But just before the train was to leave he reappeared, panting, carrying a clothes brush engraved with his name, which he insisted on my taking. It was ridiculous to think of his tearing through the streets to bring me so absurd a present, but at the same time, it showed something of the state of things.

Our courier, or interpreter, or whatever he was, kept his eye on us sharply for the rest of the journey. He was a young Jew, typical of a multitude of others who were thriving under the service of the Soviet Government, for they seem to have a peculiar facility for adapting themselves to conditions under which the ordinary man sinks. I was old enough to have been his father, and found his rudeness almost unbearable. He was constantly breaking into my conversation with my wife, and he was amazingly lacking in common sense. His chief aim seemed to be to pump absurd propaganda into the ears of strangers.

Digitized by Google

"We have organized life magnificently for what used to be called the lower classes, and for the workmen," I heard him say. "Every other nation but Soviet Russia neglects them, exploits them, lets them rot—"

And yet every few moments through the train windows an example of this magnificent, organized life would pass by, a ragged peasant or a lean woman with a pale child. We had with us for a time the official representative of Esthonia, a uniformed officer. He became visibly impatient at this torrent of misguided information.

"You need not tell me any more," he said finally. "I know Russia and we have nothing against your people. You asked us for peace and for it you paid us fifteen million in gold. We accepted it. That is sufficient for me."

At last we steamed into the station at Petrograd, where we were met by two officers who had been sent by Zinoviev, the Governor of Petrograd. We were only going to stay in Petrograd for a few hours, for the same train was taking us to Moscow that night. A motor car was waiting outside the station, and we

Digitized by Google

bumped over dilapidated and half deserted streets to the great Osoruvsky Palace, where formerly the meetings of the Duma were held, and where Zinoviev now has his offices. The Hall of the Duma is at present used for occasional public meetings, for conventions and festivities of different kinds.

Zinoviev rose from an enormous desk to greet us. He told us that Petrograd was open for our inspection and that we could go about where we wished until it was time for our train to leave. I asked him what had become of the deported anarchists who had been sent back to Russia from the United States. He said that Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman and a few others of the original two hundred and forty-nine from the "Soviet Ark" were in Petrograd, and that Emma Goldman and Berkman were living at one of the government hotels and were getting on very well, he believed. This completed the interview and we were promptly presented to another interpreter. I told this particular fellow that I could get along perfectly well without him since I spoke Russian as well as he did,

Digitized by Google

but he insisted firmly that I needed him. Apparently, it was the rule not to allow any foreigner to go out alone. We were to hear only what they wanted us to hear, and see only what they were determined that we should see. It soon came to be more than I could put up with for me, a Russian, to be guided about in my own country in this absurd way.

Our latest friend started out with us for a pre-arranged sight-seeing tour. I half expected to see a bus outside with "Chinatown and the Bowery" written on it. We were motored down Petrograd's great boulevard, Nevski Prospect, and started on the tour of churches and public buildings as if we were typical American tourists bound on "doing the town" before dinner. I was prepared for a contrast with the great and brilliant city that I had known, but the Petrograd that I saw struck me with almost a chill of fear. The great thoroughfare was there, and the majestic buildings that I recalled, but there was an air of melancholy and ruin everywhere. The shops shuttered; windows broken; shabbiness and decay and dirt everywhere.

Digitized by Google

Imagine Fifth Avenue vacant and deserted; its gorgeous shops boarded up; great gaps in its pavement; its hotels empty——. It was like a city of the dead.

After we had visited the second empty church, my wife rebelled.

"I did not come to see this sort of thing, Mitri," she said. "Can't we get rid of him in some way?"

I told our guardian that my wife was tired and that we would go back to the train. So we were driven to the station where he saw us safely on board and left us. As soon as he was out of sight we went out into the street again and made our way toward the hotel where I had just been told Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were living. It was the Astoria, the most famous and most gorgeous of the old Petrograd hotels, in the old days comparable to the Ritz of London or New York in its luxuriousness. I found it dilapidated and filthy, the carpets torn and soiled, the elevator out of commission, as if it had been sacked by an invading army. We were met at the door by soldiers with rifles,

Digitized by Google

who told me that I must have a pass to enter the hotel, when I said that I wanted to visit comrades from the United States.

They showed us into a little reception room where we could obtain a pass, and here, in a space of about twenty feet by fifteen, so blue with smoke that it gave the appearance of a Turkish bath, there were a score of men and women listlessly waiting. Finally, since no one seemed to be the least interested in us, I went up to one of the officers and asked him if I could see Emma Goldman. I told him that I had understood from Zinoviev that she had been staying there for a long time.

"I never heard of her before," he said. "But if Zinoviev says she is here I will try to find out." He looked through the register for a moment.

"All right! She is here! Now what do you want to see her for?"

"We were comrades in the United States. My wife and I are delegates from the Socialist Party of America."

At last we were given a pass and we found our way to the room that he had indicated,

Digitized by Google

passing a soldier on each floor. I rapped on the door, which was opened by Alexander Berkman.

"Great God! What are you doing here?" he said.

"Where is Emma?" my wife asked.

"She is downstairs trying to cook," Berkman answered. "I will get her up here in a moment."

He telephoned to her, and while we were waiting I looked around the room. There was a sword hanging on the wall near the writing desk, and I asked him what he used it for. He told me that he was an officer, and that it was part of his equipment as a member of the Red Army.

Presently the door opened, and Emma Goldman came in, carrying a tray.

"For the love of Mike! How did you get here?" she exclaimed. She put her tray down on the center table, and after her first astonishment was over we sat down to eat. There were some canned peaches that had a familiar look about them, and my wife asked her if this food had been supplied them by the govern-

Digitized by Google

ment, but it turned out that she was still getting along with the reserve supply that she had brought from the United States.

We stayed with them several hours, as both of them seemed delighted to see somebody who had just come from the States, and they asked us innumerable questions about their comrades whom they had left behind. Then the talk turned to Russia, that tremendous enigma which is puzzling the entire civilized world. It did not take me long to find out what was Emma Goldman's opinion of the Soviet Government. She was as frank about it as she could be. I had explained to her my bewilderment at the things I had seen and heard in the few hours that I had already spent in Russia. Could she explain away this atmosphere of hostility and fear on the part of the very people for whom this dictatorship of the proletariat had been founded?

"Tell me, Emma," I begged, "what is this government of Russia?"

"It is too rigid. There is too much system!" she exclaimed. She waved her hand violently. "There is no government here. I

Digitized by Google

mean that. Conditions are horrible. I would rather live in prison in America than be free in Russia."

My astonishment was so great that I almost fell off my chair. The first realization of how great was the difference between the reality and the illusion that the working people of America and ourselves had entertained concerning Bolshevism began to impress itself on my consciousness.

That night we left for Moscow, arriving there early in the morning. At the station we were met by several officers of the Red Army, and a company of soldiers and a military band. It was an extremely noisy reception. The soldiers shouted and the band played the "Internationale" until the whole place resounded with it. It was too much honor, I felt, for a simple person like myself. I might have been the Czar in the old days returning to his faithful city of Moscow. After the cheering and the waving of red flags had quieted down, we were greeted by the official reception committee and were taken to a magnificent limousine outside, the same car, I was told, in which

Digitized by Google

the Czar used to ride, and were driven to the hotel which is used by the Government to install their guests, the old Commercial House. It could hardly be recognized under its new dress, for it was decorated with red flags and bunting faced with enormous letters in practically every language of Europe—German, French, Russian, English, Italian. The four-story building had completely disappeared under this mass of decoration.

My wife and I were given three rooms equipped with all modern improvements, steam heat, electricity, telephone and bath. Breakfast, we were told, would be ready at nine o'clock in the common dining room, where we would meet delegates from all over the world.

I changed from my traveling clothes, and feeling that one ought to be suitably attired for meeting this illustrious gathering of International Socialists, I put on the ceremonial frock coat, white vest, and an uncomfortable high collar. I did not want the American Socialist Party to be ashamed of one of its members.

Digitized by Google

But when I came into the dining room with my wife at nine o'clock and saw that everyone was glancing at me with utmost surprise, I wished that my appearance was not quite so formal. Later on I discovered that nearly everyone thought that I was there as an ecclesiastical representative from the churches of the United States. I felt so much out of place in the midst of all these men in ordinary business clothes that I slipped out again immediately and put on the suit which I had just taken off. Every one smiled when I took my place again beside my wife. The first man to greet me was Patrick Quinlan, who had come there as the American representative of the I. W. W. I met John Reed and a few other Americans, and then the French, English and Italian delegates who were in the room. There were interpreters for all languages. The breakfast was simple but there was plenty to eat, the famous Russian cereal, "kasha," plenty of bread and cheese, coffee, tea, sugar and fresh milk.

After dinner an automobile was provided for us, and my wife and I were taken to the

Digitized by Google

State Department, which is now in the Hotel Metropole, where we met Tchicherin, the Commissar of Foreign Affairs, and an assistant who was introduced to us as Comrade Rosenberg. We spent about an hour with Tchicherin, who furnished us with credentials as delegates to the Second Congress of the Third International. Tchicherin said that this gave us the privilege of going anywhere we wished in Moscow, although we must not go outside the city without special permission. From the Foreign Office we were driven back to the hotel, where black bread, chicken, candy, ice cream, tea and cheese were served to a still larger gathering of delegates. It was obvious that the guests of the Government were not to go hungry.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

MOSCOW REVISITED

ON the next evening after our arrival, we were taken to the Imperial Theatre, the great opera house of Moscow. The enormous auditorium was filled to capacity. The aristocracy and beauty of the old days were gone; the decorations over the Czar's box had been torn away. Here, where what was perhaps the most brilliant society of Europe used to gather, was now a mass of common soldiers, officers with the Red insignia, young boys and girls, and a host of shabbily dressed men and women. Gone were the jewels, the gorgeous gowns, the lavish display of wealth, the nobility of Russia—the great landowners who spent their winters in Moscow, the officers in their gorgeous uniforms, who always stood motionless facing the Czar's box during the intermission. The golden ceiling, the staring boxes,

Digitized by Google

tier after tier, looked down upon the Proletariat. The inner fortress of society, of capitalistic luxury had been captured by the people who used to stand outside its doors enviously watching these people of a higher world descend from their carriages.

When we entered the theatre with the other delegates, a great shout rang out, "Long live the Third International!" The entire audience rose to its feet and sang the national air of new Russia, the chant of social revolution, which has the same significance in Russia as did the "Marseillaise" once in revolutionary France. With its innumerable stanzas it took almost ten minutes to complete it, and then, still standing, they sang it all over again. I thought to myself, that these people were either enormously patriotic or else they were enormously patient. Later on, when I heard this melancholy and yet stirring air for the ten thousandth time, I grew so weary of it that I felt I never wanted to hear it again. When the audience finished applauding itself for its part in the performance, Shaliapin, the greatest bass in the world, sang for us. He is

Digitized by Google

extremely popular with the public, as indeed, are nearly all the great singers and actors of the old régime who have not fled to Paris or America. They are paid enormous salaries. For example, I was told that Shaliapin for singing before us that evening received 200,000 roubles. It is true that while I was in Russia I could exchange one of Uncle Sam's ten dollar gold pieces for 100,000 roubles, or over 50,000 roubles for our paper currency in the same amount. With my small store of coins it would have been possible for me to have ordered a private performance of an entire opera. But nevertheless it is obvious that in Russia a fifth of a million roubles is still an immense sum.

After the performance, and after the audience had favored us again with the "Internationale," we were taken back to the hotel, where supper was served at eleven.

Both my wife and I were greatly impressed with what we had seen, but we agreed that we had not come to Moscow for music and caviar and receptions. We wanted to know how it fared with the Russian people them-

Digitized by Google

selves. We had had four hearty meals that day, and there must have been thousands of men in the great factories of Petrograd and Russia who had gone to bed hungry and who were wondering whether the next week would bring them enough black bread to keep their children from starvation. So it used to be in the old days in Russia, and so it was today.

We decided that at the earliest possible opportunity we would get away together from the government interpreters and go about the city ourselves. But in the morning we were told that we had an appointment with Karl Radek, the President of the Third International of the World. There is something ironical in the fact that Radek's office is in the former German Embassy, a stately building from which the eagle of Germany had been torn down. When we entered, I was astounded at the beauty of the interior, luxurious furniture, crystal chandeliers, and valuable paintings which must have been worth a fortune. We met Comrade Radek in what was formerly Count Mierbach's office. Radek is a Jew, and an extremely excitable man. As soon as he

Digitized by Google

saw us he began to shout as if he were in a violent rage about the errors that the Socialist Party in the United States, and incidentally my wife and I, had committed.

"Why was the Socialist Party so slow with the revolution in America? Why were you so much behind other countries? Why have you waited so long to endorse the Communist Party?"

I told him that I would explain all of that later on to the best of my ability, but at the present time I had come to get a permit which would enable us to go about Moscow freely.

"Very well," said Radek. "I will see that you have an interpreter so that you will be able to understand everything that you see."

When we returned to the hotel, we were formally registered and put through a form of cross-examination by the commandant of the hotel, who had his soldiers stationed in every hallway. It was very much as if we were arrested. He also gave us a pass by which we were enabled any time to enter or leave the hotel. The commonest acts of life seemed to be bound up with an insufferable

Digitized by Google

amount of red tape. As we were leaving the hotel for a walk through the city, a young Jew by the name of Feinberg stopped us at the door. There seemed to be no way of dodging these interpreters.

"But I do not need you," I protested. "I speak Russian perfectly and I served in the army and I have lived in Moscow." But it was of no use. Feinberg said that things had changed, that even streets were changed, and that he really could not permit us to go alone. So, weary and in silence, we tramped with him around more buildings and churches, and even went into a soldiers' home. But we spoke to no one. It was a repetition of our experience in Petrograd, and when we returned we decided that it must not continue and the next morning we would slip away from the hotel too early to be caught by these tireless guides.

Quite early the next morning, before the official breakfast was served, we slipped out between the guards at the entrance and started to see what Moscow was like in reality. Outwardly, at first there seemed to be no great

Digitized by Google

change. The main streets were not in such bad repair as in Petrograd, there were fewer blank windows. On the whole, the people who passed seemed to be a little better clothed. But the same air of decay and misery hung about them and pervaded the city. The shuttered shops, many with their plate glass windows smashed, told that commerce was dead; but as we penetrated deeper into the poor living quarters of the city the true condition of things became more and more apparent. We met men and women walking, or rather shuffling up and down the streets as if they had been driven out of their lodgings by sheer inability to stay still. You have seen animals pacing up and down in their cages. It was like that. In the parks they sat in the sunlight—motionless, abject and hopeless. These were the people who had not found a place for themselves under the dictatorship of the Proletariat. Driven to the very verge of misery, they looked forward hopelessly to a future of suffering from which they could not escape, and there was no possibility of a revolt against this future left in them. The complexions of

Digitized by Google

most of them were unpleasantly yellowish, and they seemed slightly bloated. Here and there we saw people, as we had in Petrograd, whose jaws were bandaged, for their food, or lack of it, affected their teeth and there are no dentists, nor money to pay them if there had been. Here in these poorer quarters you could see that civilization was dying. The stench of its decay was everywhere. Once we penetrated into a courtyard, which was faced with the black windows of a hundred tenements. It would be useless to try to describe it. I have seen the slums of other great cities, but never have I been so impressed with the sufferings of human beings as in these back streets of Moscow.

My poor wife was so oppressed by what we had seen that we made our way towards the broader avenues for fresh air. And here, though the air was clearer, was the same picture of decadence. The cement of the sidewalks was cracked so that it was dangerous to walk on them; windows were smashed and gaping from the blackened fronts of the houses with rusty tin stove-pipes projecting

Digitized by Google

from them, which must have poured their smoke into every tenement above.

The sewer pipes were broken, and through cracked basement windows we could see foul lakes of black water with refuse and garbage and dead cats. I did not wonder so much that people were dying under these horrible conditions, as that under them it is possible to live at all. And yet, somehow, they were managing to live, dragging on from day to day. And children were being born to them and were dying in the foul atmosphere of the streets, for there were no medicines, no doctors, or milk, and the mothers themselves were undernourished and gaunt.

Many of the men and women in the streets were barefooted, some in their stocking feet, carrying their shoes in their hands to save them for the winter. Old men and women and cripples were begging openly, dozens on every block. Anyone decently dressed became a mark for them and they rushed toward my wife and myself in swarms. We gave them money, of course, paper money, and twice women fell upon their knees and blessed us.

Digitized by Google

It was insufferably painful and there was no pleasure in giving it, for what possible use could they make of a score or so of roubles when a pound of bread that was sour and black is worth almost twenty times what I had given them?

To escape, we went into a church, which was empty, save for one or two old women and a priest. From the outside we expected to find it looted, for the *ikons* were so rusted that it was impossible to distinguish their subjects, and the very stones were dingy with neglect. But inside it had not changed, for the great paintings, the brilliant mosaics, and the huge gilt altar with its bronze gates had not been injured. But it was deserted, cast aside by the people like a worn-out shoe.

We sat down in the great cool building to rest for a moment, and I tried to tell my wife as best I could what Moscow had been like fifteen years ago. At home, before the war, I had always promised her that some day we would go abroad and visit Petrograd and Moscow and Odessa. In her mind she had thought of these far-off cities as far more picturesque

Digitized by Google

and beautiful than anything she had ever seen in her own country. She realized, of course, that four years of war and three more of social revolution had changed their outward aspect. But, nevertheless, her disappointment was intense. When once a house has fallen to ruins, when its paint is peeling off, and its roof sags with decay, it is hard to picture it fresh and clean, the home of prosperous happy people. I felt that she must think that I had deceived her, so I told her how clean the streets were kept, of the three-horse *troikas* that used to race through the boulevards in winter with their silver bells; of the porter at the door of every house, who used to wash the pavements with water every morning, standing in the doorway with a white apron for the rest of the day; of the order that reigned everywhere; the gorgeous shops where anything in the world could be bought; the restaurants with their gypsy orchestras; the great crowds and marvelous music of the male choirs in the churches; of the festivities in the parks—of everything that came to mind, as part of the brilliant despotic civilization that

Digitized by Google

one recalled now as a distant and faint memory of something beautiful that is gone forever. I told her that the air rang with the sound of bells from the churches in the Kremlin and from every part of the city on Sundays and sacred days, and what the great Hotel Metropole had once been like before it had become the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"But that was bad, Mitri," she said. "And the poor man suffered to produce all that wealth and beauty."

"Yes," I said, "it was bad, and I fought against it."

Jessie was silent for a moment, and then she looked at me sadly. "I wonder after what has happened, Mitri, if this is any better?"

"It must be better," I said. "The dream which we have held for a life-time has been too great to be dispelled overnight. It must be better!" Yet I was haunted with the fear that these men who governed Russia had made it worse.

As I was anxious to enter into conversation with some of the people, I spoke to the first man we met after we had left the church. He

Digitized by Google

was of the old type of Russian Jew, and wore a long beard, so I asked him if there were many synagogues in Moscow.

"Yes," he said. "But I worry about getting something to eat, and not about synagogues in these days."

When I told him that we were American Socialists, and that we were interested in the condition of the country outside of its public affairs, he asked that pathetic question to which later on I grew accustomed—the question not about our opinion of Russia, not about the revolution in America, which their papers tell them is imminent—but this:

"Can you get all the bread you want in America?"

"Yes," I said. "We have bread and anything else you want."

He turned to us earnestly. "I suppose it is true," he said. "You have everything and in this country we are starving. And yet we have no right to protest. We have no right to criticize, to publish anything that the Bolsheviki do not like to hear. The only press is their press. There isn't even justice. I used

Digitized by Google

to be in business, a good business, and now I try to make a few miserable roubles on the side, and some day perhaps an enemy will bring charges against me. I will be shot in some dirty courtyard. That is the sort of rule we are living under. But I know you people; you won't tell America that."

I asked him if the Government interfered in any way with the Jewish services at the synagogues.

"Always a spy is there," he said. "And if anyone says anything against the Bolsheviks he hears of it the next day. They still let us go to church, but in winter they do not furnish us with any wood, and naturally most of us have stopped going."

"But it isn't cold now," I objected.

"We are too worried and frightened to bother about it any more. The rabbis used to live on what we gave them at the church. Now many have died. Our God has forsaken us."

"I used to be a tailor," he went on bitterly. "My shop was taken away from me three years ago. They robbed me of everything, and now for working for the Government

Digitized by Google

eight hours a day I get just enough to keep soul and body together."

I told him that the Government was doubtless allowing him as much as they could, but he did not listen to me.

"They are a gang of cut-throats and thieves," he shouted, and then, as if he were afraid of what he had said, he walked rapidly away.

As my wife was fatigued, we made our way back to the hotel, where we found that a number of Communists and delegates were about to go to a children's farm which had been organized by the Government, outside the city. I rode out with them, while my wife rested. The farm is situated seven or eight miles beyond the city limits, and we entered just in time to take dinner with the children, who came trooping in from the fields. We ate with them, and if their dinner was a sample of their customary rations, I fail to see how it is enough for a growing child. It consisted of two slices of bread, a bowl of thin soup and a plate of *kasha;* there was no milk or sugar. But the children looked fairly well, beyond all

Digitized by Google

comparison better than the poor little wretches we had seen on the city streets, for at least they had green fields and fresh air. In the city they were thin and sickly, and dirty with neglect, for a mother cannot clean her child's clothes without soap. The feeling of oppression that had been stealing on me more and more lightened; here was an effort to relieve a little of the pervading misery, one constructive thing that the Government was doing for its people. I realized, however, that this school was used as an example by the Government in order to impress the delegates, and that there are only a few of them, a little oasis in the midst of hundreds of thousands of suffering children of the cities.

While the interpreter was telling the delegates of this and the other educational reforms which the Government was attempting, I talked to some of the children outside. I had heard a few uncomfortable rumors about the way some of the schools were conducted, for in the one we were visiting, and in many others, the teachers were all men, with boys and girls there together from fifteen to eighteen years

Digitized by Google

of age. However, as far as I am aware, there is no justification for these rumors; but since human nature is what it is, it is undoubtedly a profound error on the part of the authorities to house girls and boys of this age under the charge of men teachers.

Remembering the religious education of the children of my days, I asked them if they were accustomed to pray in the morning when they got up. One of the girls answered that they did not, and that they had no Bibles. The girls were allowed to wear crosses, but the boys had laughed at them so that they took them off. Their family *ikons* had to be kept in their trunks. They were not allowed to have them in sight in their rooms.

Later on I went up to one of the teacher's rooms to drink tea with him. The walls were covered with pictures of the Communist leaders. There were Lenin and Trotsky, Karl Marx and Liebknecht, and others of allegorical subjects portraying the fall of capitalism. I asked him in what way their teaching differed from the education before the revolution.

"Aside from the elementary things, the three

Digitized by Google

R's and in this school, agriculture, we are teaching them to be good Communists," he explained. "For history they have the class struggle between the laborers and their masters through the ages. They must learn, for instance, the Communist Manifesto of 1864; the story of the Second International in 1889 and its evolution in 1917 to the Third International. Then they are told of class consciousness, of the struggle between labor and capital, of the various methods to overthrow the governments of the world. One of the advanced courses concerns the effective use of propaganda. They are taught, in short, to take their places, when they graduate, as thorough Communists and revolutionists."

It occurred to me that the great school systems outside of Russia might do well to take something for their own benefit out of the Communist conception of education. A great deal might be gained even in schools in America in teaching pupils some of the economic conditions which are to rule their lives, for though I do not pretend to any expert knowledge of education, I know that the children

Digitized by Google

of our schools are brought up in ignorance of the mechanics of the capitalistic system under which they must live.

In another hour we left the school and returned to Moscow, where in the evening about two hundred delegates of the International from all over the world met and discussed conditions in the various countries. It was a veritable tower of Babel; one heard at the same time Italian, Spanish, German, French, English and Russian; to say nothing of the speech of our compatriots from Turkey and the Balkans. There were several interpreters present, who were the most astonishing linguists that can be imagined, and could turn from one tongue to another with the greatest facility and ease.

On the next day we paid a visit to Lenin, who is perhaps the most remarkable man in the world today. He has surrounded himself with so many barriers and so much red tape, that to get into his presence is almost as difficult as it would be to secure an interview with royalty in other countries. It has its justification in the threats and attempts that have

Digitized by Google

PAUL LEVI, A GERMAN DELEGATE AND A MEMBER OF THE REICHSTAG

NIKOLAI LENIN, HEAD OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

been made against his life. Indeed, the visitor to Russia, when he sees the violent hatred that surrounds the Government, cannot help constantly wondering why the Bolshevist leaders have not been assassinated before this. Certainly it is not from lack of experience with this form of terrorism.

The City Commandant of Moscow gave us the necessary permit which would take us to the gates of the Kremlin, where we were stopped by two soldiers, who, after examining our passports, telephoned to an office inside for permission to allow us to enter.

In the great enclosure of the Kremlin, surrounded by an immense, ancient wall, are the most beautiful and the oldest churches in Russia. In one of them, which was severely injured by a shell during the fighting of the second revolution, the Czars of Russia had been crowned for generations. Nearby lay the huge, historic bell which has been photographed by so many thousands of tourists, and beyond it the long, low façade of the old royal palace where the Czar stayed on his visits to Moscow.

Digitized by Google

This place is now the center and the soul of the Russian Government, for in it Nikolai Lenin has his headquarters. Standing between the buildings are huge cannon, artillery guns and mortars, with shells of enormous size, for in case of another revolution, if the Government loses the protection of the Kremlin, its position in the capital could not be held. It was in the Kremlin that the Kerensky Government made its last stand for the control of Moscow, and I have heard it said that if the resistance of the young cadets who garrisoned the fortress had been supported by the anti-Bolshevist citizens of Moscow, the city would not have fallen.

Except that it is so dingy that you cannot tell its original color, the Czar's palace is uninjured. We went in by the great door, but after going through the usual ceremony of presenting our documents and passes we were told to wait in the palatial hall. Around us nothing seemed to have been touched. Doubtless it is exactly the same as it was when the Czar of all the Russias lived there. The polished floors shine like glass, and around us

Digitized by Google

were the beautiful paintings and furnishings of the Romanoffs.

In about ten minutes I saw the familiar figure of Lenin approaching. In appearance he is an extraordinary contrast to one's idea of how the dictator who rules all Russia with an iron hand should look. If you were to meet him on the streets of Moscow as an ordinary citizen, I doubt if it would occur to you to give him a second glance. He might be a clergyman from a small town in the States, or perhaps a middle-class and not too successful business man. But when you examine him closely you can understand a little of the great force that emanates from him. He has the broad forehead of the thinker, but it is his eyes that are most impressive, for they are sharp and penetrating and very shrewd. When he is conversing casually he seems extremely amiable, and when he smiles his eyes are so narrowed that they almost disappear. He has a rough good humor, and is constantly saying things that make people around him laugh. He is not an orator, but is an extraordinarily well read man, and he talks on the

Digitized by Google

affairs of Russia and the world very freely. He appeared to me to be perfectly familiar with the conditions of Europe, also those of America, and I doubt very much if he is in the slightest degree deluded by the propaganda that floods the country. I presume that he is in constant communication with loyal Communists of various countries. But when he talks seriously about the social revolution and the struggle abroad he becomes grave and stern, and it is then that you see the force of his greatness.

Lenin was very affable to us and spoke in his broken English, since my wife did not understand Russian. We told him who we were and why we had come to Russia, and he asked me questions about the growth of the revolutionary feeling in the United States, the Socialists, the Labor and the Communist movements and other things, which I answered briefly and as well as I could. The conversation turned upon Russia.

"If your government had not interfered with us," he said, "Russia would now be prosperous, in a better condition, perhaps,

Digitized by Google

than any other country in the world. But we are not to blame. It is you Socialists on the other side who are allowing the capitalist class to blockade us."

I answered that we were not yet sufficiently powerful in number, and he shrugged his shoulders in an unbelieving way and changed the subject. Then he told us that since we were there, we must certainly stay for the congress of the International, which was going to be held the next month.

"You will have a message, and a powerful one," he said, "to give to the working people of America when you return."

This closed the interview, and he shook hands with us again and left us.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

WORTHLESS MONEY AND HUMAN SUFFERING

IN order to complete the downfall of the capitalist system in Russia, buying and selling is forbidden by order of the Government. Theoretically, all property in Russia belongs to the nation and cannot be exchanged privately for gain. But with the great cities literally starving, and with the complete lack of the vital necessaries of life, the attempt to suppress what must be one of the most primitive instincts of mankind, has failed. The paper money is debased to almost nothing, nevertheless it still has purchasing power, and so, day after day, peasants from the surrounding country secretly bring into the city small quantities of flour and vegetables, while second-hand clothing, fur hats and matches, and even jewelry, are offered for sale in the markets.

The center for this illegal trading, which

Digitized by Google

actually goes on all over the city, is the great open market, with the adjacent bazaar, which was once called the "Jews' Market." By the time we arrived, the Government had begun to wink openly at this illegal trading, though their spies prowled about the market-place in order to catch the criminal who operated on a larger scale, the speculator. Occasionally, a particularly zealous commissar would attempt to put a stop to it by arresting everyone in sight, but on the next day it went merrily on as if nothing had happened. I was told that at one time ten thousand people were rounded up in this market, but as there was no room for them in the jails, they were released very soon afterwards.

We visited the market on the day after our interview with Lenin. It was a pathetic spectacle, and to me it was a final denial of the essential principle of Communism. Many of the Bolshevists believe that their failure to stop petty trading is the result of the prevalent scarcity of necessaries. If Russia were prosperous, so that the Government could furnish the population with sufficient food and

Digitized by Google

clothing, they believe that this illegal traffic would cease. But that does not account for the many objects I saw offered for sale that were not necessaries of life, such as rings, jewelry, cigarette boxes. There seemed to be a desire among the people of this poverty-stricken city to own things that would distinguish them in some way from their neighbors. If Russia becomes prosperous again, this desire of the individual to own property in addition to what the Government gives him will increase rather than diminish; for how can any ruling group of men foresee all the desires of mankind?

When we arrived at this market, which is about four or five blocks in length, it was swarming with people, and all of them seemed as nervous as a herd of cattle who were about to stampede. Bulkier objects were laid on the ground, the more valuable things hidden under coats and in pockets. The prices, which seemed to be regulated from some mysterious source, were quite stable. Bread, for example, was 500 roubles a pound; a very indifferent herring, for which a housewife in the United

Digitized by Google

States would refuse to give ten cents, was offered to me for 3000 roubles. A package of ten cigarettes, made of the horrible tobacco which the soldier smokes, wrapped up in newspaper, was 500 roubles. A single piece of dirty lump sugar obtained the enormous value of 200 roubles, and a box of matches cost just half as much. As for shoes, a single pair was priced at 50,000 roubles, while a pair of cowhide boots was for sale for 100,000 roubles, and both the dealer and purchaser stood in great danger of arrest, for a transaction involving such a sum came almost within the limits of speculation, which meant perhaps summary arrest and death.

The ground of the market was filthy, and my wife came to the limit of her endurance when she looked into a barrel of mashed potatoes which were offered for 250 roubles a pound, so we turned back toward the open street.

At the entrance I met a man with a pound of flour who seemed eager to give me information. I asked him how much it would take to live reasonably well in Russia today.

Digitized by Google

"A single man can live luxuriously on 200,000 roubles a month," he said.

"What do you mean by luxury?" I asked.

"Food, enough food! Butter, perhaps a little sugar, good meat and now and then chicken, besides, of course, the usual black bread and fish."

"How about clothes?" I asked.

"No, you couldn't buy clothes on it, though if you cut down on some of the other things you might be able to get a pair of shoes."

I asked him to make out a list of the living expenses of this hypothetical Russian with a millionaire's income. It ran something like this: Sixty pounds of bread for 30,000 roubles; chicken three times during the month, 30,000 roubles; meat four times, 25,000 roubles; three pounds of sugar, 20,000 roubles; butter, 14,000 roubles; four boxes of matches, 400 roubles; occasionally fruit, such as strawberries, pears, prunes, approximately 25,000 roubles. The remainder might be spent for coffee and tea, salt and incidentals, and perhaps for tobacco.

Theoretically, again, in the ideal Communist

Digitized by Google

state there should be only one class—the Proletariat. But here again a universal instinct of mankind has fought and has won the battle against theory. In America, the place you occupy in society is indicated by your education, your work, the house you live in, the clothes you wear and the food you eat. Here it is largely a matter of wealth. In Russia, the same distinctions, the same classes exist, although wealth has been destroyed. In Russia a man who is a member of the Government, a commissar, is at the top of the heap, then comes the employee of the Government, the prosperous peasant, the soldier, the man who is listed as a Communist. After these fortunate members of society come the common laborer, the bourgeois, and lastly, the unfortunate man who cannot work with his hands and is too much a part of the old system to secure employment in the Government. And in the structure of Russian society he is doomed, as the drunkard and the degenerate are doomed in our social scale. It is true that in Russia the actual difference between the upper and lower sections of the scale seems

Digitized by Google

less than it does elsewhere, but it is greater than the difference between the millionaire and the workingman in this country.

Toward the top of the ladder you can be warm in winter, sufficiently clothed and have enough to eat; at the bottom you live in a frozen, uninhabitable tenement, surrounded by dirt and disease, your clothes are in rags, and you are always a little more than half-starved. It is the difference between comfort and utter misery. One man gets two pounds of bread a day, and has the power of buying more for his family; another gets a pound, and a third receives three-quarters of a pound for two days. The same distinction applies in every way. I have brought back with me, for example, three pieces of soap which were made in Petrograd and distributed there. The first is an oval-shaped cake or ordinary soap such as one can buy in this country, intended for the Commissars; the second is a rough chunk of gray substance, for their assistants and for officers; and the third is a small cube, hard as stone and black as ink, which is distributed

Digitized by Google

to the proletariat workers. If you are below that rank you get none at all.

After our visit to the market, we returned to the hotel and to what was getting to be the accustomed routine of dinner and theatre, interspersed with repetitions of that song of revolution, the "Internationale," and the next day we went out to a military hospital near the Kremlin, where we distributed to the soldiers cigarettes which had been thoughtfully provided by the Government before we left.

The men seemed glad to see us and asked me the conventional questions about America. "Had we enough to eat there? What salaries were paid, and could the workingman get white bread?" There were two large wards filled with men, cared for by a few male nurses, owing to the nature of their disease. A man told me that the usual length of their stay was about two weeks, and that, although of course there was no chance of their being cured, since they were not given medicine or drugs of any sort, they would be sent back to the front as soon as they were able to walk. They received exactly the same food as at the front, black

Digitized by Google

bread, soup, *kasha* and tea. But on the whole these men did not seem to care greatly. They grumbled, of course, but the Russian trooper has always been the most stolid and long-suffering soldier in the world. It is on this quality of infinite patience that the power of the Soviets rests.

After leaving the hospital we visited a church nearby. It was almost empty, but in the distance, limping across the pavement, I saw the priest. In appearance he seemed infirm, very old and emaciated to the last degree. His complexion was that unpleasant grayish yellow which I had seen on the streets. One eye was gone, leaving a gaping wound. My wife gasped and instinctively drew back. I questioned this spectre of misfortune.

"Yes," he answered. "I am the priest of this church. I was born in Moscow and I have lived here all my life."

"I want to find out as much as I can," I said, "about the conditions today in Russia. We are Americans, and you can trust us thoroughly." I could see that he was still afraid that I had been sent there as a spy, but

Digitized by Google

finally, when I told him that the sooner the American people knew the truth about Russia, the better it would be for his people, he gave in.

"Can you come behind the altar?" he whispered.

He led us through the door to a place where we could not be seen from the front of the church.

"Look at me!" he exclaimed. "How old do you think I am?"

"Sixty-five or seventy," I answered, "perhaps more."

"I am forty-five! The Bolsheviki have killed my wife and children. You know, of course, that in Russia all of the priests used to be married. Instead of killing me, the soldiers gouged one of my eyes out. It is a miracle that I am still alive. Many other priests suffered the same fate when the Kerensky Government was overthrown."

The thought came to me that it would have been better if he had been killed, for though a man may be deprived of everything, no one can take from him his capacity to suffer.

Digitized by Google

"What hurts me most," he said, "is to see the misery of the small remnant of my people who still come here. The poor souls bring pieces of bread to me as their offering, depriving their own children of food that they need desperately, and sometimes I am ashamed to take it, but while there is life in me I must go on."

"Do you get anything from the Government?" I asked.

"Now and then I can find a place with the gangs sweeping the streets or sawing wood, but they will not give me any clerical or office work."

"You would be better off," I said, "if you joined the Communist Party and became one of them."

The wretched man looked at me for a moment, and then said quietly, "My dear brother, understand that my father was a priest and his father before him, and the Communists know it well."

"But you are old now," I said. "What would happen if you became really sick? Could you get a doctor?"

Digitized by Google

TYPES OF SOAP USED IN RUSSIA, ILLUSTRATING CLASS DISTINCTIONS: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS; OFFICERS AND LESSER OFFICIALS; THE PROLETARIAT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"It is simple enough," he said. "I will die. But what is death? Life is nothing to me, and whenever God calls me I am ready. After losing my wife and children I have no cares left. This miserable existence does not deserve to be called life. If when you go away you wish to report me to the authorities, I shall not care; I shall only pray that you may be forgiven."

I told him not to worry, and that we would not betray him, and after my wife and I had shaken hands with him warmly, we went to a nearby park, as she said, to get the chill of that place out of our bones.

"It was like having a conversation with a dead man, Mitri," she said. "Hell cannot be worse than what he is going through."

There were a number of Austrian prisoners walking restlessly about the park, prisoners of a war that had ended three years ago. Apparently one of them heard us talking in English, and he came up to us and asked us if we were Americans, and if so what we were doing in Russia. He had been captured in the second year of the war and had been sent to

Digitized by Google

Siberia, where he had stayed for three years and had finally been brought to Moscow to be deported to Austria. But the release had never come and he and a few comrades that were left, for many had died of their hardships, were working as laborers for the Government. Another Austrian, who seemed by his bearing to be an officer, asked me if I spoke Russian, and if I could speak to him privately for a few minutes, so we walked a short distance away from the rest.

"Tell me," he begged, "what is going on outside of Russia?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"The Allies. Aren't they going to come into Russia?" And when I told him that they were not coming, "God!" he cried, "we have been waiting and waiting for years for that to happen. It was the only hope we had, and we were ready to help them. We are worn to the bone—and there is no end to it."

He turned abruptly and walked away.

I could see some of the men muttering among themselves, so I told my wife that we were among prisoners and that there was

Digitized by Google

danger that they would think I was a spy, so we hurried away. As we walked, I could not help reflecting that never had I seen so much bitterness in every class of society toward any existing government. In the old days it was hatred and anger against the despotic government of the Czar, but today these people had not enough courage left to be angry. They were bitter and hopeless. Even the waiter at the hotel had been sullen when I asked him if he received the same food that we were getting.

"We would be just as badly off as anybody else," he said, "if we didn't steal. They watch us, but we manage to get away with a good deal after you have left the table."

I was astonished when he told me that he was not a Communist. He did not believe in their doctrines. There were not enough Communists, he said, to fill positions of that sort and they have to put up with anyone they can get.

When we reached the hotel, my wife asked me if it would not be possible to get in touch with some of the women of the city. "No one

Digitized by Google

seems to think or care about them. They are just as much a part of Russia as the men."

So that afternoon we went straight to a park where I had noticed a number of mothers sitting with their children under the trees. A group of curious women in shawls, and barefooted, ragged children, gathered about us. This was their time for rest, it seems. Most of them had already worked and had gone home to bring their children to the park. In an hour or so they would have to go back to work again.

I told them that we were Americans, and one little boy of about three, after staring at me earnestly for a few minutes, said, "Please, Uncle, can you get nice things to eat in America?" This pathetic question from a child who was little more than a baby, was really heart-rending. The boy's mother, a young woman, burst into tears, and Jessie asked me what he had said. We have had children of our own, and I did not want to make her sad, but she insisted. "Tell him, Mitri," she said, "that we will come back tomorrow with something for him to eat," and she put her arms

Digitized by Google

around him and kissed him with tears in her eyes.

We were so anxious to get back to the children that we thought that the next morning would never come. My wife insisted that we must bring them candy, too.

"A little bread won't be of much use to them, Mitri," she said. "They want something sweet, and you have to get some candy, if you have to steal it."

So I became a thief. After lunch I robbed both tables of all the candy that I could put into my pockets, and my wife waited with me until the delegates had left the table and stuffed her bag with more. Then I found some sugar on the sideboard and wrapped it up in a newspaper with all the bread we could find. We walked to the park as fast as we could, and found a small host of youngsters waiting at the entrance for us. We sat down on the grass with the children in a circle around us, and distributed our spoils. One candy and one lump of sugar to each. The count did not come out even, so we divided all that was left and gave it to the mothers.

Digitized by Google

One of the poor creatures told me that it was the first time in six years that she had had a piece of candy.

Among the rest was a very attractive young woman, who it was obvious had once belonged to the upper class. "I do not ever hope to be happy again," she said. "The old days have gone forever. When I was married just before the War, the whole world seemed so beautiful. It is like a dream now. My husband is dead, and I work for the Government, and it is hard to get enough to live on. Except for my boy over there, I have no one else left. You see they killed my poor husband, shot him without trial as a counter-revolutionist, which was not true; he was not doing any harm. I hate them and I have to work for them. It is not so bad in summer, but last winter was so dreadful, I do not want to live through another. I have no clothes except what I have on, and the winters are so dreadfully long."

When I translated this to my wife, she went back to the hotel for a heavy sweater that I had brought with me. When she came back

Digitized by Google

with it, it did not seem fair to give it to her in the presence of the others, some of whom were in perhaps greater need, so I asked them to draw lots for it, and we were delighted when the young woman who had won our sympathies proved to be the winner.

That afternoon while we were in the park, several of the foreign delegates with their interpreters passed by, and I felt certain that they would do something to stop my wandering about the city by myself. And I was right, for the next morning the Commandant asked me to come to his office, where he informed me politely that it would be really wiser if I went out with some of the interpreters in the future.

"But," I objected, "I am a Russian and I know Moscow well. It is absurd for me to go around like a tourist in a foreign country."

"Very well," he said, "suit yourself. I have simply given you my advice."

I determined, however, to be more circumspect in the future, because I felt certain that I would be watched. Their intention was obvious. They did not want the delegates to

Digitized by Google

come into contact with the suffering that was going on in the city. But it was impossible to avoid this, for it met one at every turn.

One evening, when I was coming home late from the theatre, I saw a girl lying on the sidewalk in front of the old Hotel Metropole. The night air was cold and she had wrapped her bare feet in newspaper. The poor creature told me that her parents had died and that she had no home, and had slept the night before in the park.

"Why don't you go to some of the Red Guard for help?" I asked. "They ought to give you a corner to sleep in."

"I have been to them, but they will not listen to me. Can't you take me home with you?"

"But I am married," I objected, "and I live in a hotel."

"Then take me to your wife," she pleaded, "and tell them that I am your sister."

"But that isn't possible," I said. "They know I have no sister. I will give you money instead."

"But I don't know where to find a room!

Digitized by Google

You can't do anything with money in Moscow."

However, she took the few hundred roubles, but although she thanked me and cried, she did not let me go. She seemed to see in me her only salvation for the future. At the corner of the street a group of soldiers were standing, so I went up to them and told them that I had found a girl sleeping on the sidewalk in great misery.

One of them shrugged his shoulders. "Well, what of it?" he said. "You see scores of them every night. There are thousands just like them all over the country. Everybody is starving."

I wanted to walk away and leave her, but something compelled me to turn back. "Come with me," I said, "and I will see what can be done for you." She started to kiss my hand and seemed half insane with joy and gratitude.

But at the door of the hotel the soldiers would not let her in. She had no pass, and that settled it as far as they were concerned. I sent word to my wife to come down, because

Digitized by Google

I thought she might have some influence on them. She asked me to tell the guards that since we had three rooms we could take care of her, and that she would look after the girl herself, and be responsible for her until we were able to provide for her in some way. But it was no use, and it ended by our leaving this poor, lost creature sobbing in front of the door, while we went safely up to our comfortable quarters.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

SOLDIERS OF THE RED ARMY

FOR some time I had been anxious to inspect one of the Moscow prisons, which I had heard were very much over-crowded, to see if the conditions there were as bad as they had been reported. So one afternoon, during the following week, I went to one of the jails which had been used for political prisoners in the old régime. The usual soldiers were guarding the gate. I asked one of them for what crime the majority of their prisoners had been convicted.

"Most of them have been caught buying and selling in the streets, and besides that we have a lot of speculators, but they don't stay with us long." And then he added with a grin, "We are pretty well filled up, but I guess I can find room for you inside if you are anxious for a little vacation."

Digitized by Google

I told him that I was a delegate from the convention and had a pass allowing me to go anywhere in Moscow, so finally he was persuaded to summon the Commandant. A man in a dishevelled uniform came out, and as soon as he saw the red badge I wore on my coat, he allowed me to go in with my wife.

Those who had told me that the conditions in the prisons were horrible had fallen wide of the mark. They were unspeakable. The rooms were black with filth, and some of them were so dark that they were like caves, for rags had been stuffed into the windows to take the place of the broken glass. In each room there were five or six men, who glanced at us with an air of utmost anxiety as soon as the door opened. I was to learn the cause of their anxiety later on. Every man that I spoke to told me that he was there for trading in the streets, but no one would admit that he had been speculating. They were not physically maltreated or punished in any way, it seemed, unless, indeed, any punishment could be greater than having to sit in one of those stifling cells day after day.

Digitized by Google

From there I went to a political prison in another quarter of the city, but I was told that in order to get in it would be necessary to see the head of the much feared "Extraordinary Commission." The guard said that he had never known a stranger to be allowed to enter, so I gave up the idea readily.

A few days later, Ivanoff, one of the Government Commissars in the Department of Propaganda, called on me at the hotel and asked me if I would lecture before several thousand soldiers garrisoned in Moscow, at the clubhouse of the Red Army. I accepted, and the next day my wife and I were driven out to a large structure, which in many of its essentials was very like a Y. M. C. A. building in the United States. It provided a restaurant, card rooms, a theatre and a lecture hall, etc., for the men.

The building was crowded with troops when we entered, and we had dinner with a number of officers at a long table in the restaurant. Most of them were a careless and cheerful lot of youngsters. But there were several older and more serious men, who I imagined had

Digitized by Google

been officers in the old days. Few of these older officers are Communists at heart. They are serving with the Red Army because they are soldiers by profession and because they must do that or starve. I have heard that many of them have become ardent Bolshevists, but it is difficult to imagine that an officer who had been trained to believe that he belonged to a totally different social order from the private, could ever accept the new equality. In the old days their life was regulated by the strictest formality; but since then they have seen their men mutiny and their brother officers murdered. Now they had to call these peasants whom they commanded, "Tavarish," comrade.

Soon after, I stood on the platform, facing a sea of khaki-colored uniforms. There must have been over two thousand men present. They were very attentive, for I spoke to them about the United States, and of the great interest that the American workingmen had in Soviet Russia. I knew the sort of speech that I was intended to make, and delivered it to the best of my ability, and then went on to

Digitized by Google

tell them more about conditions here. When I came to the description of the wages paid in the United States and the cost of living, the interest of my audience became intense.

A representative of Ivanoff was sitting beside my wife, and when I happened to glance at him once, I saw that he was violently shaking his head. Things were not going as he had wished, and I realized instantly that I was not on the right track. I brought my lecture to a close, with the usual request for the audience to ask me any questions that they wished.

One man after another shouted to me from his seat, not the sort of questions that you would have expected from these soldiers who were fighting for the Revolution of the World Proletariat. Not one of them inquired of our government or of our institutions. They were the same pathetic questions I had heard so many times—can you buy in the United States all the bread and the sugar and the milk that you want? Can the ordinary workingman buy clothes if he needs them? Can a poor man get a decent meal in a restaurant? The questions

Digitized by Google

were thundered at me from every corner of the auditorium. I shouted out one or two answers, and then the Commissar, who obviously had become more and more disturbed, jumped up on the platform. I continued to shout my answers, for I did not see why I had not a perfect right to speak, but the Commissar stepped in front of me, and when he obtained silence he told them that Comrade Schwartz had not come from the United States to answer their questions, but to tell them of the progress of the world revolution, and to bring to them the greetings of the American Socialist Party.

"Long live the Government of the Proletariat!" he shouted, and when the cheering was over, the meeting dispersed.

Afterwards I shook hands with a long line of men, and it occurred to me that since we could not speak to each other as we wished with our tongues, they were trying to express what they felt in another way. All of them, I am sure, knew that I had spoken the truth, but they must have wondered why it was so much at variance with what they had heard

Digitized by Google

of the results of the capitalistic despotism of America on their own class. Some of them must have had relatives in the United States, for the Russians emigrated to the United States before the war in large numbers. Many of them, including a group of officers, asked me to speak to them again. I told them that whenever I was invited, I would give up anything to come to them, but I knew well that this would be the last time I would ever have the chance, for I had made a serious blunder in letting them know that the American workingman is well paid and that he has good food and clothes. They had endured so much suffering and want, these men of Russia, who ought to be plowing the fields around their villages, or at work in the factories! And I had opened to them the vision of a paradise such as they did not know existed anywhere. In many of them, I presume, the thought had half formed itself, "For what have we fought, when in America, which still suffers the burden of capitalism, a common man may have everything that we lack?"

When I left the building, I told my wife

Digitized by Google

that it was impossible to get in touch with the soldiers by speaking to them in public. What the Bolshevists wanted from me was propaganda for their own cause, and therefore it was impossible for me to speak the truth, or get in touch with the men themselves. The best way was to wait until the opportunity presented itself to speak to them in private.

One day in the latter part of June, on my way out from the Kremlin, I noticed a number of soldiers eagerly discussing something. I told them that I was an American Socialist, and that I wanted to get as much information as I could.

"But we have just come back from the Polish front," one of them said, "and are trying to find out what has happened since we left."

"I don't mean about Moscow," I replied, "but about the army itself. For instance, what do they pay you?"

"They pay us nothing," said another, sullenly. "We get 600 roubles a month, and you can just about get a pound of bread and a handful of tobacco for that."

Digitized by Google

"But your rations," I said. "'You get bread from the Government, of course."

The man laughed. "Yes! One pound a day, and I could eat two pounds without stopping and then be hungry for more. It has been weeks since my belly has been more than half full. If any one wants to know what the Russian Army is like, you can tell them it is as hungry as a wolf."

"But you get other things besides bread," I objected.

"A chunk of meat now and then," he said, "but usually it makes you half sick to eat it. It has a fine, rich smell. Sometimes they give us a little sugar, but most of the time they don't. Besides that we get a little cabbage soup and *kasha*. That sounds all right, but just the same I tell you I am hungry. We are all hungry."

"But you have established a government of the proletariat," I said. "You are fighting for it, and you belong to it yourself. I don't see why you complain?"

No one answered, and I saw that they were beginning to be a little frightened of me, so

Digitized by Google

I asked them about their duties. It seems that they were not allowed to enter the city except with a permit, and could not carry a revolver on the streets, and that they were regularly on duty, when they were not at the front, for eight hours a day.

Several officers were in the group, and one of them asked me why I wanted to know these things.

"Because I have served myself in the army for over fifteen years," I said, "and naturally I am interested in the new methods."

"Those were good old days," another man said.

"Perhaps," I answered, "but you had no liberty then, and after all that is what you are fighting for."

No one replied to this, but from the attitude of several of the officers, I could see that they wanted to speak to me alone. Now it was time for their drill. Two companies had formed in front of a nearby building, which served as their barracks, and I watched the men lining up in the old formation with which I was so familiar. One of the officers came

Digitized by Google

up to me and asked me what rank I had held in the army. When he heard that I had been a lieutenant, he suggested that I might like to drill them for a moment.

"But you have probably made a great many changes since my time," I said.

"Try it, anyhow," he urged. "A little of the old-fashioned methods wouldn't do them any harm." So it ended by my stepping out in front of the line and giving the old commands. Someone gave me a gun and I went through the manœuvres that were the fashion twenty years ago. It caused a good deal of laughter, but in some ways the old methods were much simpler. For example, when the troops were ordered to fire, they shouldered their guns and fired instantaneously. Today, five separate movements are involved before the gun is fired. But on the whole, they knew their business well, though they presented a ragged and disreputable appearance to anyone who remembered the old army.

When the drilling was over, the officer took me into the barracks, where I talked to the men for a long time, and I heard a great deal

Digitized by Google

of what they had endured during the war on the German front. Certainly it had been enough to make any army in the world revolt. They had been treated like cattle, crowded together in the trenches with men who were sick with the worst infectious diseases. They had been cut off from their food supplies sometimes for whole days, and almost constantly suffered from the belief that they were being betrayed by the German agents and sympathizers in their own country.

When I left the barracks, the officer who had spoken to me before, followed me, and with a mysterious air asked me if he could make an appointment to speak to me alone that afternoon.

"I can tell you something about the real state of affairs in the army," he said. "I can't say anything to you now because we might be seen together and it is always best to be careful. I will bring another officer, a friend of mine, with me."

I told him that if there was any conspiracy on foot, I preferred not to have anything to do with it, that my only reason for agreeing

Digitized by Google

to meet him at night would be that he might be able to give me information which would be of interest to me and my people when I returned home.

"Don't think that I am going to get you into trouble," he went on. "I can't come to the hotel where you are staying because I have no permit to enter, but if you will meet me after supper in the park opposite the Imperial Theatre, I assure you that you will never regret it."

"All right, I will come," I said, "though I think it is dangerous. But I will bring my wife with me, because I am certain that if she is there it will seem less suspicious if we are recognized."

But my wife, when I told her, was frightened at this mysterious interview.

"For all you know, they may be spies, Mitri," she urged, "who are taking this method of finding out your opinion of the Government. It is too dangerous, and for some time I have felt that we are not as safe here as you think. I have seen so much misery in this country that I want to get home."

Digitized by Google

"Don't worry, mother," I said, "they will never dare harm us. We have come here as delegates from the United States, and they will have to let us go back safely whenever we want to leave."

She was still unconvinced, but finally agreed that we had better go together. At eight o'clock we were in the park. Suddenly we heard footsteps coming up behind us and someone seized me by the shoulder. My wife cried out with fright, because she thought that this time we were certainly being arrested. But it proved to be the two officers whom I had agreed to meet, and after introducing them to my wife, we paced up and down the park together while they told me their story, which I tried to interpret to her as we went along.

"Comrade," the man that I had met that afternoon said, "what you see here is a country enslaved; the people have lost their freedom, and no one dares open his mouth to protest. I did all that was in my power to bring about the first revolution, and so did my friend here. But I would rather live un-

Digitized by Google

der the worst Czar that Russia has ever had than in what they tell us is 'Free Russia' today."

"Mr. Schwartz," the other man said solemnly, "when you go back to America, I wish you would tell as many of your countrymen as you can what the people of Russia have endured at the hands of the Bolshevik Government. They have robbed our fathers, insulted our sisters, and killed our brothers."

"But all that is too vague," I broke in. "Everyone knows that you cannot have a revolution without some bloodshed."

"But it is going on today," he went on. "Every day men are arrested and shot without trial. Families are torn apart, men disappear and no one knows what has happened to them, except that they are never seen alive again."

"That may be," I said, "but I came here to hear about the army."

"It is held together by fear," he said, "just as everything else is. Everywhere the men are dissatisfied, and although every resource of the Government is used to keep up its

Digitized by Google

morale, I do not see how it can be held together a great deal longer. The men are supplied with plenty of propaganda, but they cannot eat words and they are getting to the point where they do not believe what is told them any longer. Ever since you told our men this morning that there was prosperity in America and food enough for everyone, they have been arguing about the difference between life in Russia and in your country."

I told them that I had not intended to make any trouble, and that that was not my reason for coming to Russia, for I was beginning to feel more and more that these officers might be spies. I knew that one of the delegates had already been arrested after he had talked too freely with a friendly officer.

"No one's life is safe here," he went on. "If you should report, for instance, that we asked you to meet us here this evening, we would both of us be shot inside of twenty-four hours. There is less disorder in the streets than there was in 1917, but a system of terrorism has grown up by means of the spies of the Extraordinary Commission that

Digitized by Google

makes it just as bad. There are murders in secret now instead of in the open streets."

For an hour or more they continued to tell me of what they had been through in the last three years. Both of them had been in Petrograd when the cadets surrendered to the Bolshevists. They had seen scores of these young officers pulled out into the streets from the buildings they had been defending and beaten to death with the butts of revolvers. Ordinary citizens had been dragged out of their houses and shot without mercy. Armed Communists had gone to the restaurants and tea shops to terrorize everyone inside. Later on in Moscow, the brother of one of these men for an inoffensive remark had been killed before his eyes by two of these Communist bullies and his body had been left to freeze in the snow all night before he was allowed to take it away for burial. One of them had seen the massacres in Kiev; the other had been in the south and had more horrors to tell. But it would be useless to relate them here.

Finally they left us, and on the way back to the hotel, my wife and I decided that we

Digitized by Google

were in some danger. We could not rid ourselves of the suspicion that the men we had been speaking to had not been sincere and that they had laid a trap for me. But I had said nothing that would actually incriminate me except once, when I remarked that the Bolshevist Government had no place in the twentieth century. But it must have been obvious to them that I was not in sympathy with the Soviet Government. That alone was enough to insure my arrest.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

COMMUNISM ALONG THE VOLGA

THE next morning, since we were still resolved to leave Russia at the earliest moment, I went to the Foreign Office and asked Tchicherin for passports.

"Comrade," he said emphatically, "you must not think of leaving before the meetings of the Congress, which are to be held in a short time. You have come all the way from the United States to Russia, and we want you to be able to assure the working people of America of the solidarity of their brothers throughout the world.

"Also, we are sending a special boat for some of the delegates down the Volga, where you will see some excellent work that we have accomplished in the cities along the river. It will take you about two weeks, and you will be back in time for the first meeting of the Congress, which will be held in Petrograd.

Digitized by Google

"No! My advice to you is to stay a while longer," he said finally. "We cannot let you go so soon, comrade. The trip down the Volga will be very enjoyable and you will find that places are reserved for you. Good-bye and a pleasant journey."

Tchicherin had been polite enough outwardly, but it was obvious that we were completely at his mercy, and that we could not leave Russia until he was ready to let us go. It was amusing to be refused on the grounds that we had not seen enough of the country. Imagine the State Department of the United States refusing to allow a foreigner to go home until he had visited the Niagara Falls or taken a trip down the Mississippi! The invitation to go on this pleasure trip on the Volga had been actually a command and Russia had become a prison.

There were a great many rumors at the hotel about this trip, and some of the delegates were not anxious to go because of vague reports that there were anti-Bolshevist bands along the river who might capture or blow up the boat. Someone said that the wires in

Digitized by Google

that direction were being constantly cut. However, I did not take this seriously, and was glad to find that my wife was anxious to go. She was tired of the monotony of life in Moscow and longed for the green fields of the country.

Finally the night arrived when we were told to pack up and be ready for the train to Nizni-Novgorod. Twenty-eight delegates assembled in the station, mainly Italian, French, English and Dutch. Two interpreters had been sent with us, both prominent workers for the Communist cause, Comrade Losovsky, a member of the Central Committee, and Madame Adelina Balabanova, one of their most active propagandists, and famous as an orator. Both were great linguists, speaking German, French, Italian and English with great fluency, and having a considerable knowledge of many other languages.

A special train was made up for us. The engine was decorated with red flags, long red banners stretched along the sides of the cars with "Long live the Third Internationale and the Proletariat of the World" printed on

Digitized by Google

them. The Communists are clever propagandists, and they are constantly spreading throughout the country by means of propaganda trains, and these "Red Specials" such as ours, the idea that the working people, the masses of every country, are behind the Soviet Government. It forces the people of the remote cities and villages to believe that it would be useless to rebel against the present government, since in the end every other nation will be ruled in the same way.

As usual, the way had been prepared for us. At every station we were met by red flags and regiments of soldiers with their brass bands stretched along the length of the platforms. At the larger cities the trains stopped long enough to give the foreign delegates time to deliver addresses from the steps of the cars, which were interpreted by Madame Balabanova and Comrade Losovsky. I was the only one who was not called upon repeatedly before the end of the trip, for they had evidently learned their lesson. If a delegate spoke to these people in their own tongue he would have to answer their questions and

Digitized by Google

they did not want the public to know the prosperity and the contentment of the average American workingman. It did not suit their purposes.

At one or two of these stations I left the train and spoke to the people about me in the station, but in each case the rumors spread about that one of the delegates was from America and could speak Russian, and the crowd about me instantly became so dense that even those who were listening to the interpreters joined it. I could see that it was making me decidedly unpopular with the rest, so I had to stop, but actually it proved that the people were desperately anxious for real information from the outside world, and that they were not greatly deluded by what we in America would call "canned speeches" of the Bolshevist orators. Bolshevist propaganda appears everywhere; soap box orators on the street, posters, pamphlets, the stage and all of the newspapers have repeated the worn-out phrases so many times during the last three years that it was probably true that most of them have lost all of their significance. When

Digitized by Google

you tell a man the same thing a hundred times he may end by believing it, but he will certainly be bored to death by it.

The reception that we had at Nizni-Novgorod surpassed any that we had seen yet. Thousands of troops were massed in the station with their flags and brass bands, and we were almost deafened by the tumult of cheers and music. The station was a mass of red bunting, and so were the automobiles which took us to a hotel dining-room where breakfast was awaiting us. It was a plentiful meal, for almost everything that one could imagine eating at that time of the morning was on the table. Afterwards reporters from the newspapers obtained interviews with us, and in this case mine was entirely satisfactory, for I knew that if I said anything that they did not like it would be censored before it appeared in print. Later we were driven about the city, and at noon reviewed a military parade in our honor, which included regiments of cavalry and artillery.

Nizni-Novgorod is built upon a hill and is one of the most beautiful cities in Russia.

Digitized by Google

It spreads out on both sides of the Volga, which is crossed by picturesque wooden bridges. As I recalled the city, one of its most interesting and busiest places used to be the enormous open market in a wide square, where innumerable objects were offered for sale in the open or in the small shops and passages along the sides. It was once one of the largest markets in the world. Now it is used by the Government as a warehouse and is as dilapidated as everything else is that was once prosperous in Russia. The shop windows are smashed, the doors are barred by rusty chains, and everywhere there are soldiers with rifles on guard. The great square is desolate and dirty. Indeed, the entire business section of the city was in the same condition as in Petrograd and Moscow. Not a single store was open and there were few people on the streets. I spoke to one or two who were passing along what was formerly the most important street of the city, but they looked at me in a frightened way and hurried away without answering.

After the parade we dined with several

Digitized by Google

members of the city administration and other prominent Communists. Again the tables were loaded with food, as if to prove that the hunger of Russia was a myth. In the evening we went to the opera house, where in the intermissions between the opera and ballet the "Internationale" was played so many times that one of the delegates at my right was almost overcome with boredom. Then there were speeches, delivered by our friends the interpreters in our behalf, in which they expressed for us our great joy at being present in Soviet Russia, and our hope that our own people would join Russia in the world revolution. It was with a good deal of difficulty that I was able to keep my mind on what they were saying so as to be able to interpret it to my wife, for I had heard it all a great many times.

I was startled when these tiresome speeches were greeted by loud and enthusiastic cheers from all the soldiers present. Later on I discovered that the enthusiasm which our presence met with everywhere on the part of the soldiers was simply a matter of routine orders. The officers had ordered them to cheer and

Digitized by Google

they were simply obeying their commands. Our visit to Nizni-Novgorod and down the Volga was really a matter of propaganda. It was intended that we should be impressed by the outbursts that greeted our arrival everywhere, and the people, on the other hand, were to be assured through us that the workers of the rest of the world were unanimously supporting the Bolshevist Government. Indeed, to a foreigner who could not understand Russian, and so look behind the scenes, it might very well have seemed that all that we saw of Russia was unitedly in support of the Communist rule.

On the next day we left the city and boarded the river steamer which was to take us down the Volga as far as Saratov. Day after day we slid along the green banks of "Mother Volga." But it was a different river from the one that I had known in the old days. Gone were all but a few of the countless small steamers and barges and rafts that used to carry the traffic of the great fertile plain where a great quantity of the grain for exporting to Europe was grown. Most of the

Digitized by Google

wharves that used to be piled with the products of the farms and with manufactured goods from the cities had the appearance of being deserted. This great river thoroughfare that flows through the center of Russia has suffered the same fate as the railroads. When we stopped for wood at some of the smaller villages, the peasants looked at us sullenly.

At every one of the larger towns where we stopped, we were received in the same manner. Parades of troops and workingmen; mass meetings in local theatres where speeches were made for us by Losovsky and Madame Balabanova; band concerts and dinners. Sometimes it was relieved by the presentation of gifts to the delegates. We received boots, shirts of local manufacture, Russian belts and new samovars, and our cabins were loaded down with spoil. Comrade Losovsky was the keeper of the treasury, and we were informed that if we needed Soviet money he would give us all we wanted, and square it with his department of the Government by adding it in with his expense account.

Digitized by Google

Personally, I did not make use of this extraordinary generosity, but most of the other delegates filled their pockets with paper roubles whenever they wanted them. After we had stopped at half a dozen towns, it occurred to me that our expedition was not unlike a vaudeville troupe doing the rounds of the Chautauquas in the United States, with Losovsky as our manager and Madame Balabanova as our press agent.

Simbiersk, where Nikolai Lenin was born, outdid all the others in our honor. We arrived there on a very hot day in the middle of July, and after we had been serenaded by brass bands and had been given a huge luncheon on board the boat, most of the delegates were taken by motor car to see the city. My wife and I, however, deserted the sightseeing party and walked to the little bazaar of the town. As we made our way up the sandy and dusty hill which led from the river bank, we passed two young women seated on a pile of heavy timber by the roadside. My wife called my attention to them because they were so

Digitized by Google

ragged in appearance and because one of them looked so ill.

"Good-day, sister," I said.

"Good-day, sir," one of them answered. "Are you one of the foreign delegates from Moscow?"

I told her that we had come from America, and the other girl asked my wife in a weak voice if we had any bread that we could sell.

I answered for her that I would be glad to give her some money so that she could buy some.

"We don't want money," she said. "My sister and I have a little ourselves. But we have not been able to find any bread for sale this morning. We have got to walk home and we are very hungry."

I translated what she said to my wife, who was greatly distressed and urged me to go back to the boat and bring them something to eat. So I rushed down the hill again and into the boat dining-room to get a package of bread, and brought it back to them.

The sick girl fell on her knees to thank my wife, and both of them began to eat the coarse,

Digitized by Google

black bread like hungry wolves. Mrs. Schwartz was so distressed that she could not watch them, and walked up the hill with me, crying.

As there was nothing to be seen in the bazaar, since it was as deserted as all the others that we had visited, a useless monument to former prosperity, we turned back toward the boat, and almost at the bottom of the hill saw a group of people standing around a dead horse. Sitting on the ground by the horse's head, was the driver, a bearded peasant. He was crying bitterly, like a child who has broken his toy. Several of my companions from the boat were laughing at him, for there was something ludicrous in the sight of a husky peasant shedding tears for a raw-boned horse to whom death had brought a happy release from his sufferings.

"I wonder if he would cry that way if his mother-in-law died?" I heard one of the delegates say in English.

They turned back to go to the boat. I told my wife, who was always so warm-hearted that the sight of suffering or grief made her unhappy, to go back to the boat with them.

Digitized by Google

Finally the poor devil of a carter stopped his sobs and picked up a rock from the roadside. With this and with a clumsy piece of iron he tried desperately to tear off one of the horseshoes from the dead animal. I put my hand on his shoulder.

"Comrade," I said, "you can't take off the shoes with that kind of a tool. They are of no use to you anyhow."

The poor creature looked up at me. "I can get a thousand roubles for them, and I haven't a kopeck to my name," and he started in again to try to wrench off one of the shoes.

"Leave that alone," I said. "I will give you the thousand roubles myself. Was it your horse?"

"It was all that I had in the world," he said bitterly, "and without him I will starve. I haven't even any boots any longer. I sold them yesterday to buy feed for him, and now I have got the feed and no horse and no boots for next winter. Is it any wonder that I cry about it?"

"How much did you get for your boots?" I asked.

Digitized by Google

"Fifty thousand roubles."

I dug into my pocket and took out a few pieces of paper. "Here you are," I said. "Don't worry any more about it."

The man looked at me with a dazed and frightened expression, as if he thought I had suddenly gone mad.

"Who are you?" he said, "and where do you get so much money that you can give it away to a stranger?"

I told him that I had come from America, and that fifty thousand roubles in the money of my country was worth only ten roubles of the old Russian money before the revolution.

The man stuffed my money into his pocket and burst out into loud exclamations of joy. I regretted that my friends from the boat who had laughed at him, had not stayed, for I should like to have told them how terrible a catastrophe the loss of his horse had been to this poor man. Doubtless, when they return to their own countries they will write that the Russian people are so sentimental and have so great a love for their horses that they bury them with tears.

Digitized by Google

I took the carter, still dazed with the good fortune that had befallen him, back to the town to a restaurant controlled by the Government, where free meals are served to government workers, but where anyone could buy food with Soviet roubles. I asked two or three hungry-looking men, who were standing at the door of the restaurant as if they hoped to satisfy themselves by the smell of food, to have something to eat with us. Without a word they fell in line behind me, where we waited our turn, for the restaurant was run on the system of a cafeteria.

I had to put up a deposit for all the dishes and the utensils used; 100 roubles for each spoon, cup or dish, and even 50 roubles for the bottles in which lemonade is served. I was given a round badge with a number on it, and when we filed out again the deposit money was returned to me. The commonest objects had become of such great value, that the owner of a restaurant could not run the risk of having them stolen.

At last we were served with a bowl of *kasha,* some strange soup, the smell of which

Digitized by Google

was so offensive that it completely took away my appetite, black bread and a glass of weak tea. My companions, however, seemed to enjoy it enormously, and had not the slightest reluctance to finish everything that I had left.

I had taken off my delegate's badge because I did not want to excite too much curiosity, and we sat at the table for over an hour while they told me of their increasingly difficult struggles to find work enough to keep them alive, and the final result was that I gave away almost all the money that I had with me. I realized that it was useless charity, for it would serve them for only a few days. But it was impossible to resist my desire to relieve their distress even for a short time.

All of them were violent anti-Bolshevists, and they believed in some vague way that the people of America, which they thought of as a land where everyone was fabulously rich, would be able to help them, if they could be told of the desperate condition of Russia.

They told me that at night their houses were constantly broken into by Communist agents, who searched them from cellar to

Digitized by Google

garret. If they found that any one owned more than a single suit of clothes, or one pair of boots, they would be taken from him. Forty thousand roubles was the limit of the amount of money they were allowed to have, and they were forbidden to own any jewelry, gold watches or gold wedding rings, or foreign money of any sort. Often it ended in a fight between the soldiers and the occupants of the house who were searched, which usually resulted in one or two people being shot while the rest were taken away to jail. In other words, the city government deprived every man who was not a Communist, of absolutely everything of value, leaving him and his family only enough clothing to cover their nakedness and enough money to buy food for five or six days.

It struck me that the Soviet Government was the most remarkable institution in the world, since it assured the masses not of prosperity, but of poverty, abject, hopeless poverty. They can look forward to no more than two or three days of security; the poverty that means utter destitution and in which

Digitized by Google

starvation follows directly on the heels of sickness or temporary incapacity to work. Under the conditions of today there is no future for the people who live in the cities of Russia. The peasant is certain that the fertile earth will bring him food for the next year, providing soldiers from the cities do not rob him of his stores; he does not need money. But the city dweller, since he can save nothing, is every day faced with disaster. Death is his only relief from the greatest fear of man, the fear of hunger.

As we were leaving the restaurant, it occurred to me that it would be interesting to know the other side of the story, if there was one, so I asked one of the waiters if I could see the manager of the restaurant.

"You will find him upstairs," he said. "Go up and knock at the first door."

I did so and found two men, who were obviously of the better class, sitting at a long table drinking tea.

"Good-day, comrades," I said, "I am one of the delegates to the Third International, and have just come in on their steamer."

Digitized by Google

"What do you think of the country?" the older man asked. "You seem to be a Russian, so I suppose that you knew it in the old days."

I told him that I had been in Russia only a short time.

"It isn't necessary to go far," he said. "We are just as cheerful and contented in Simbiersk as they are in Moscow. You delegates are lucky people," he went on. "I suppose that the Government has even allowed you to keep a watch on the end of your chain. They took mine long ago, chain and all."

It was easy to see that the man was not a Bolshevist. I asked him to tell me about his work, and apparently he was willing to believe me when I told him that I was not a Communist myself.

"I hold a very distinguished position," he said. "I am the manager of this restaurant. My friend here is in my employ, and when you came in I was trying to get him to change places with me. I want him to be the manager of the restaurant, and I will be delighted to be his assistant."

Digitized by Google

I turned to the other man. "Why don't you take his job?" I asked. "It sounds like a good chance."

"Not me!" he said. "I am not looking for any more trouble than I have got. Why should I take all that responsibility for a pound of bread a day and two horrible meals. If anything goes wrong I don't want to be the one to blame."

"But don't you have more privileges?" I asked the manager.

"I have more responsibility and probably less food than he has," he said. "He has regular hours and I have to stay here until all hours looking after the accounts and preparing for the next day. If anything is stolen I suffer for it. It is a great life, my friend. Once I had everything; now I have nothing."

I asked him if he spoke any other language besides Russian, because he had explained that he had been one of the wealthy, educated class in the old days.

"Yes, I speak German and French, but it is absolutely of no use to me now. The man who speaks the language of the people, the

Digitized by Google

ordinary, ignorant workman before the revolution, is now my master. An intelligent man, whose education should make him of some use, can barely make a living. I am more fortunate than most of them."

He suddenly changed the subject.

"Have you ever seen government coffee?" he asked.

I told him that we used to get it in Moscow.

"Well," he said, "this is the sort of stuff I have to serve here. It is not quite what you delegates have been getting." He took some of it out of a box and showed me a queer, dark substance. It was unlike anything that I had ever seen before.

"You have been talking freely with me," I said. "Aren't you afraid that I have been spying on you and will report you to headquarters?"

"I will tell you something, my friend," he replied, earnestly. "You see in me a man who has not the courage to commit suicide. I tell you honestly, if after you leave I am arrested and shot in front of a wall, I will be thankful to you for what you have done

Digitized by Google

for me, for I am sick of the life I have to lead. Imagine what it was like last winter. It was six below zero sometimes in my bedroom, and my blankets and pillows had been taken away. I covered myself with rags and old clothes. My whole family, four or five of us, slept together in one bed, so that the heat of our bodies might keep us alive. We had just enough fuel to use for cooking. For weeks at a time none of us washed. When the first warm day came, I tell you that I could hardly believe that we lived through it and were still alive. It is August now; in October the cold weather comes again. The winter lasts for six months. Go ahead and report me, my friend, if you want to."

"If Trotsky came in here," he went on with a smile, "I think I would tell him the same thing. We have lost everything and we have nothing to gain by going on living. You can tell your friends in America that you have met a man in Russia who would be glad to die if he could. And tell them that there are a million others like me."

I thanked him as best I could for his con-

Digitized by Google

fidence, and after shaking hands with both of them, went back to the boat, where I found Mrs. Schwartz was greatly worried about my absence. I told her everything that happened, and as all the rest of the party were on board, we left Simbiersk in a few minutes and headed down the river again.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

WE VISIT TULA AND TOLSTOI'S HOME

SAMARA was the next important city that we reached. We had been told a good deal about the government colony for children that had been started just outside the city, and after we had been motored about Samara, which lies three miles from the river bank, we were taken there to inspect the school. It had once been the country place of a wealthy nobleman, and we found a plentiful dinner waiting for us in the dining-room, with the unusual dessert of strawberries and ice-cream as its climax.

Later we were taken to one of the reception rooms, where we were addressed in schoolboy fashion by a neatly dressed boy, with a big red ribbon on his shoulder, who seemed about thirteen. His speech, which he rattled off with great fluency and with many gestures, was interpreted to us by Madame Balabanova.

Digitized by Google

It had been so obviously written for him by one of the masters and was so unlike anything that a boy might say under the circumstances, that it deserves to be quoted.

"I am very glad," he said, "that I have had this chance to speak to the world delegates of the Third International. I want you to know how well the Soviet Government treats us here. We have a beautiful place to live in and have fine clothes and excellent food, and our education here is given to us free. Long live the Soviet Government! Long live the Third International! Long live the Proletariat of the World!"

Of course we cheered the boy, and he followed this by speaking to the British delegates in broken English.

"Under the old government we were slaves," he exclaimed this time. "We had no school, and we had to work in the factories. Our fathers and mothers were slaves. Now we have liberty and we will devote our lives to Soviet Russia. Long live the revolution!"

We cheered him again, but he did not seem to be at all flustered. He bowed to us, and

Digitized by Google

departed as coolly as a trained orator, waving a red flag which he carried at the end of a stick.

We were then shown over the grounds of the school, which were kept in good order. Madame Balabanova used it as the text for a speech to the delegates, not mentioning, however, that a capitalist had been responsible for the beauty of the place, and that there was room for a great many more than seventy-five pupils there, while in the city of Samara we had seen hundreds of sickly and pale children in the streets.

We went back to one of the classrooms, where one of the teachers explained that they had introduced self-government by the pupils under the supervision of the teachers. They are given instruction in organization work and appoint committees and officers for every department of school life. The question of religion is apparently never brought into their lives. Communism takes the place of religion, and the teachers must be sincere Communists to hold their positions.

The walls of the classrooms are hung with

Digitized by Google

portraits of revolutionists and of the martyrs who had fallen for the cause. Many of them were copies of those I had seen in the Moscow school we had visited. I asked a number of children whether they had heard of George Washington. When none of them replied, I asked them if they had heard of Woodrow Wilson. A few children raised their hands.

"Do you know who Abraham Lincoln was?" I asked.

One boy answered, "Yes, I know about Abraham Lincoln. He is your father, isn't he? You look like him."

I laughed and said, "You are a good boy. Here is a thousand roubles for that compliment. I am glad you think I resemble him."

I questioned them about Lenin and all of them raised their hands. Trotsky and Karl Marx brought the same result; but none of them had heard of Eugene V. Debs. Later, one small girl said that she had heard of Teddy Roosevelt, and Tolstoi was familiar to all of them.

In the small towns and villages the schools are little wooden shacks. The only outward

Digitized by Google

LUNACHARSKY, MINISTER OF EDUCATION

G. ZINOVIEV, PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALE

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

change from the old days is that there is a red flag flying from a big pole in front. The teachers do not seem to be very strict with the children, and there is less division between the boys and girls than at any other school that I have ever seen. Discipline is very lax, and from the confusion that reigns in the classrooms there does not seem to be very much respect for the teachers. Once as I watched the children playing in a schoolyard I saw one of the boys slapping a girl's face until she cried, and the teacher who stood nearby did not seem to take any notice of it. A woman of the neighborhood told me that they wanted her to go to school also, but that she was forty years old and had gotten along very well without knowing how to read or write, so that she had refused after one or two trials.

"They made me sing the 'Internationale' until it almost made me sick. All of that nonsense is of no use to me; what I want is food and clothes."

A few days after we had left Samara, a holiday was declared to break the monotony

Digitized by Google

of the trip. The steamer stopped in the middle of the river and we put out in small boats and went in swimming. Several of us crossed over to the other side of the Volga and bathed from the shore. Afterward we lay on the sand discussing the various phases of our trip as well as we could, for we had no interpreter with us. But the scenery was so beautiful, with the blue sky and trees and the green, sloping fields, that it was difficult to argue seriously about anything. These woods and meadows had been the same when Ivan the Terrible ruled in Moscow.

After we had dressed, I walked along the bank and saw two women walking across the fields toward the river. A heavy timber raft which served as a ferry was just ahead of me. It was a primitive affair, on which passengers and carts are pulled across the Volga by means of a chain which is connected to both banks. The river is about half a mile wide at this point, and the passengers themselves furnish their own motive power in pulling the chain.

I explained to the two women that I had

Digitized by Google

come from America to find out as much as I could about Russia.

"Won't you tell me how you manage to make ends meet in these days?" I asked.

At first they did not answer and seemed frightened at my questions, but the older one finally said, "We get on about as well as anybody else. We live in a town two or three miles back and have to work hard to get enough to eat, and we have no clothes except what we are wearing. We have just come from work, loading wagons with bags of salt. We do that for four hours, then go home to take care of our children for two hours, and after that go back to work again."

"But I was told that there is very little salt in the country," I said.

"There is plenty of it here," she answered. "Do you want to buy any? I can sell you a pound or two, if you want it."

"Does the Government allow you to sell it?" I asked.

"No, but we have a little, and we will sell it to you if you want to buy it."

I did not see that either of them had any

Digitized by Google

salt with them. They had light dresses and were barefooted and bareheaded. I told her I would be glad to buy all she had. The woman asked me for my coat to put the salt in, but I gave her a newspaper and watched her curiously when she spread it on the ground, loosened her belt and stood over it, shaking herself vigorously. The salt rattled down on the paper. She bundled it up without a word and gave it to me.

"What is it worth?" I asked.

"About five thousand roubles a pound," she answered.

I gave her twice as much as she had asked, and tears of gratitude came into her eyes. She divided the money that I had given her with the other woman, and thanking me again, they hurried down to the raft which was about to leave. I kept the salt in my pocket, and during the months that I spent in prison later, I was very glad that I had it.

We had been on the Volga for fifteen days, and some of the most interesting of my experiences were the result of deserting the official expeditions to visit nearby villages. The

Digitized by Google

others were helplessly tied to the interpreters, for I was the only one of the entire group of twenty-eight delegates who could speak Russian. Some of them were very prominent men, and I am sure that they realized that there was another side to the story than the one which was being impressed upon them by the Government. In the capital it was possible to find many who spoke foreign languages, especially French, but in these towns along the Volga they were utterly lost without Losovsky or Madame Balabanova.

It was strange to see these men having to accept as true everything they were told—such men as Quelch and McLaine of England; the famous Italians, Serrati and Bombacci; Cachin, the editor of the great Paris journal, "Humanité," and Sadoul, a former French officer who had been sent to Russia to investigate Bolshevism for the French Government and who had become a Communist and the organizer of their spy system. It was like sending a deaf and dumb man to investigate the conditions of life in a country that was totally unfamiliar to him.

Digitized by Google

Several times I took a droshky to the nearest village, while my companions were attending celebrations that had been carefully prepared in advance, and listening to speeches of welcome that were nearly always alike. Arriving in a village, I would ask the first man I met to notify his neighbors that I had come from America and wanted to tell them of conditions outside of Russia, and to ask them questions about the country. Generally I was taken to the largest house in the village, and in about twenty minutes the living-room would be packed to suffocation with curious people. In another half hour the crowd usually became so dense outside of the house that I had to repeat the proceedings in the open air.

There had been less rain than usual that summer, and I found that the peasants were greatly worried about the condition of their crops. As everyone knows, the peasants all over Russia are sowing only enough for their immediate needs, for nearly all of the villages near the great cities had been raided time and time again by soldiers, who either took their products without payment or paid them in al-

Digitized by Google

most worthless paper money. Consequently, all of them expressed the greatest hostility toward the Government, though I could not see that it would lead, at least in that section of the country, to any action on their part. They did not seem to be greatly interested in the politics of the moment. The revolution has secured for them what they have been looking for all their lives—the distribution of the estates and farms of the old land holders. Now they want to be left alone to raise their crops in peace. To the majority of them, I do not think that it greatly matters whether Russia is ruled by a Czar or by a Communist Government, though they are in desperate need of every kind of manufactured goods, from farm implements to kitchen utensils and clothing. Almost everything that was perishable has been used up and must be replaced. Without it the peasant villages of Russia are slowly drifting back to the primitive life of centuries ago, where everything that is used must be laboriously made by hand. But no matter how long it takes for Russia to re-establish herself, even though the cities fall

Digitized by Google

into complete barbarism, the country will still live through the peasantry, who form nine-tenths of the population, for their fields are fertile enough to feed not only themselves but the entire continent of Europe.

Below Samara the Volga bends westward, and is crossed by the main line that runs from Siberia to Moscow and Petrograd. At this junction a train was waiting to take us to Tula, where one of the government arsenals is situated. We arrived at that city after a long trip of almost four hundred miles, early in the morning, and were met with the usual enthusiastic reception from the soldiers, who had been waiting for us since midnight. We went to the factory, where it was said over ten thousand people were engaged in making rifles and machine guns. The workers were massed together in the yard outside the factory, where a platform had been erected for the usual addresses. Together, they were not unlike the workers from any great factory in America or Europe, but individually, many of them seemed to me to be pale and worried and lifeless, with expressions that seemed

Digitized by Google

almost stupid, due, I suppose, not only to the monotony of their work, but to their insufficient food and to the bad conditions in their homes.

The delegates addressed them from the platform, and the speeches were interpreted as usual by Losovsky and Madame Balabanova. None of the workers spoke, but stood packed together listening dumbly to what these strangers from another world had to tell of their enthusiasm for Communist rule. One of the Bolshevist Commissars in charge of the factory answered us in Russian, and his speech was in turn translated into English, French and German for our benefit. Altogether, I am sure that our friends below found it a very dull performance indeed. The remarks of this man deserve to be quoted.

"I want you to tell the workingmen of the rest of the world," he exclaimed, "that we are making two thousand rifles a day in this arsenal, and that we will keep on making them until bloody revolution has spread all over the world. We will not stop until then. The workingmen of Russia are united not only in

Digitized by Google

this factory, but in all the factories of the country, and it will not be long before you have a Soviet Government in America, in France and in England. We have been your example and you can depend on us for support."

This war-like speech closed the proceedings, and we filed out again through the silent crowd. We returned to the city, where I later found out from a newspaper man that there had recently been a serious strike in the arsenal for higher wages and more bread, but its purpose was to create a general strike in other cities with the idea of paralyzing and eventually overthrowing the Communist Government. The plot was detected by government spies employed in the factory, and the leaders had been arrested and shot within forty-eight hours. Naturally, the strike had stopped, though the feelings of the workingmen who were sent back to the shops the next day under heavy guard can be well imagined. This was reason enough for their almost hostile attitude toward us that afternoon, and it explained why one of the workmen, an older

Digitized by Google

man with a gray beard, had refused to shake hands with me as I passed him. You cannot expect workmen to show enthusiasm for a government that forbids strikes and shoots their leaders in cold blood.

When some of the delegates heard that Tolstoi's family lived only seven or eight miles from Tula, we unanimously decided that we ought to pay a visit to his home. Madame Balabanova, however, objected, presumably because the Soviet Government had not treated them well and because it was known that Tolstoi's elder daughter, Madame Sukotina, who lived at home, was decidedly opposed to Communism. I managed to get a number of delegates to insist on seeing the place, whereupon our guardians told us that it was impossible because all the automobiles were in use at the front, and the few that were left were broken down. The reader understands, of course, that the only automobiles in use in Russia are in the service of the Government. We managed, however, to get hold of a motor truck which was used by the army, and a

Digitized by Google

score of us started out the next morning, although we had to stand up all the way.

At last we came to the small white, two-story country house, in which Russia's greatest man spent most of his days. It lies about a quarter of a mile away from the village of Yasnaya Polyana, and beyond it there is a small lake where Tolstoi drifted about in his boat. At the back of the house are the stables and a cottage for the servants. We found Madame Sukotina and her daughter, who had no idea that we were coming, at lunch in the sunny dining-room. She asked me to tell the others that she regretted that she could not invite us to dine with them, as she would have done in the old days, but we must understand that they were fortunate to be able to have enough for themselves. I replied that we had only come for a friendly visit, and to take this opportunity to pay our respects to the grave of her father. Presently we started out. I walked with her daughter, a beautiful young girl of about thirteen, who spoke French and German fluently, as well as Russian, while her mother spoke in French to the delegates.

Digitized by Google

My young companion told me that the Red soldiers had come there not long ago and had tried to take away the home where she and her grandfather before her had been born, but her mother had protested and sent word to Lenin.

"Finally," she said, "they gave us back the house, but not the land. They have allowed us to keep some of our servants who did not want to go away, but everything that is grown on the estate is taken by the Government, and we have to get our food from them like everyone else."

I asked about what the people in the village thought about the Bolshevists.

"If they treat the family of Count Tolstoi in this way," she answered, "I can imagine what they do to others who have no claim on their sympathies. But you ought to go and talk to them yourself."

Finally, we came to a clump of four immense trees at the edge of a little wood, and in the center was the grave of the great old Russian who had died of a broken heart. His daugh-

Digitized by Google

ter told us why he had been buried in that spot.

"When father was a young boy, he had a cousin with whom he used to play. One day he said, 'Let both of us write something on a stick and bury it here. When one of us dies the other, who will find this message, will try to live up to it for the rest of his life.' My father had written 'Believe in the truth,' and later he expressed a wish to be buried between these trees."

Madame Sukotina told us many other things about Tolstoi's life; that he used to have his regular hours for visitors, for writing and for working, and for reading the Bible, which he did constantly. Later she showed us his bedroom exactly as it had been left when he last slept there. Even the clock had never been wound up again. The room was very plainly furnished, with a wash-stand, a picture, two chairs and a small bed.

Then we were taken up to his private study. Here were many portraits and photographs of himself when he was an army officer, and others of dozens of writers from all over the

Digitized by Google

world. We also visited his library where there were hundreds of books which Tolstoi's daughter informed us were never dusted. "Father used to read them constantly," she said.

Afterwards we walked out in the grounds and sat down on the grass. Tolstoi's daughter asked me when I intended to return to America, and when I answered that I would leave as soon as the meetings of the Third International were over, she urged me to take a letter addressed to her brother, with me. Unfortunately, it was found among my papers when I was arrested, and I have always sincerely hoped that there was nothing in it which would injure her in any way in the eyes of the authorities. She walked out to the motor truck which was ready to take us back, with my wife, who was the only woman in the party, and told her the distressing moral conditions in the little village, the roofs of which we could see in the distance. It seems that the new ideas had altered the old ideas of the peasantry. They were fast losing their belief in religion, and the effect was

Digitized by Google

most marked on the conduct of the girls and young women in the villages.

On our way back, as the truck was bumping along a rough, narrow road, we had to pass a peasant and his wife who were driving in the opposite direction. Their horse took fright and dashed by us, overturning the cart and throwing the occupants onto the road. The driver of the truck did not even look back, but plowed ahead, refusing to stop. I argued with him about it, but he growled out that it didn't matter whether they were killed or not, there were plenty more like them. In the old Russia, the man would have stopped to rescue them as a matter of course, for the Russian is no more brutal than the average man in any other country, but the ideals of this new Russia have made men callous to the sufferings of others; human life has become of little account.

We left Tula in the evening. Another band was waiting to serenade us outside of the government dining hall, and during dinner, Madame Balabanova delivered an address on the splendid morality of the Russian people

Digitized by Google

BELA KUN, ONCE DICTATOR OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

MADAME BALABANOVA, ORATOR OF THE PROPAGANDA BUREAU, OUR GUIDE ON THE VOLGA

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

under the teachings of the Soviet Government. What she said contrasted so violently with what I myself had seen, and with what Tolstoi's daughter told my wife, that a few words about this extraordinary woman who had accompanied us on our trip, will not be out of place.

Madame Balabanova, as I have said, is an excellent orator, and as a propagandist is of great value to the Government. But her conduct on the trip was startling, to say the least, when one considers that she had been chosen by the Government to accompany the delegates of so many foreign countries, whose good-will was very necessary in spreading the ideas of Communism abroad. During the warm days of July, on the Volga, she wore a voluminous red wrapper, most of the time on board the boat, and went about in this garment without shoes or stockings. On several occasions she addressed the crowds of curious peasants and town people crowded below us on the banks, with this wrapper as her only covering.

Though she is a woman of about forty-five, with thick lips and a heavy nose, she has an

Digitized by Google

extraordinary air of vitality, which shows in her small, piercing eyes. Partly due to the fact that Italy was on the verge of an outbreak, Madame Balabanova was extremely attentive to the Italian delegates. She spoke Italian perfectly and had lived there for some time. Indeed, her interest in them had become so intimate, that after I had listened to her remarks on the newly acquired virtue of the Russian people under the influence of Communist ideals, I was so astonished and disgusted by her hypocrisy, that I left the dining hall and did not return until she had finished.

On the following day we headed for Moscow by train, stopping at several cities en route, where the usual receptions, banquets and gala performances at the local theatres were repeated.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE IN MOSCOW

IN Moscow it was rumored that the first meeting of the Third International was to be held in Petrograd on the 19th of July, and I spent the intervening time in going about Moscow, as far as some of the villages on the outskirts. One day I visited an army warehouse, where enormous quantities of uniforms, boots and other clothing were stored. I was told that in Moscow, Petrograd and other centers, there were enough supplies of food stored up for the army for over two years. Almost all of the productive energy of Russia is diverted to the army.

Our evenings were taken up with official entertainments, and one night after we had heard Shaliapin sing before an audience of Government Commissars and delegates, and were returning to the hotel at about three in

Digitized by Google

the morning, for the concert had been followed by a banquet, I noticed a woman sweeping the streets, and was struck by the contrast with that which we had just left, where we had had the unusual luxuries of white bread, butter and sugar, and even ice cream and wine and candy.

I spoke to the woman, who kept on vigorously raising the dust with her broom.

"I have got seven blocks to finish before six o'clock," she explained, "and although I am so tired, I don't dare to stop to rest. My husband is sick, so I have to work at night in order to take care of him in the day time."

"Do you get enough to eat?" I asked her.

"They only allow me half a pound of bread a day, and we have sold everything we had to get enough food to keep us alive. My pay from the Government has to do for the whole family since my husband cannot work. We have two children, too, and one of them will be thirteen tomorrow."

"Can't your children help you?" I asked her.

"They can't earn any wages until they are

Digitized by Google

sixteen," she said, "but they try to earn a little by selling cigarettes on the street. I can't do anything with my girl any more. This awful life has spoiled her and she is beginning to run around with older men. It breaks my heart, but she won't listen to me any longer."

I told her that if she would tell me where she lived, I would get her something to eat for her boy's birthday. She dropped her broom in astonishment and asked me who I was.

I told her that I was an American, and agreed to meet her the following morning at eleven o'clock at the same place, with food enough for their dinner.

The poor woman cried when we left her. "God bless you!" she exclaimed.

The next morning I made up a package of bread, caviar, cheese, sugar and salt, and found her waiting for me. My wife wanted to give it to her with her own hands, and as she did so, the poor woman fell on her knees and kissed her shoes. She told me how excited her children were at the idea of having a birthday dinner with enough to eat, and

Digitized by Google

begged us to come and see them at her home the following evening.

It was a miserable hovel, with a door so low that I had to bend my head to enter. Inside, the sick man was lying on a wooden box covered with a straw mattress. A ragged coat took the place of bed clothes. The children were in the room, and the girl, a child of about twelve, sat callously smoking a cigarette, while her parents told me that they had completely lost control of her and that she stayed out till one or two o'clock in the morning, refusing to tell them where she had been.

Her father was crippled by rheumatism, I discovered.

"This is what the Communists have done for us," he cried. "I was once the owner of a hotel in Moscow, but they took that away from me along with everything else. My eldest son was killed in the war, and now I am dying by degrees. God knows what will happen to the rest of us. My wife can't live through much more of this night work. Last winter she used to come home every morning half frozen and so exhausted that she could

Digitized by Google

hardly eat. What sort of life will my children have when we are gone? My son will be a common laborer, and my daughter is already on the streets."

Mrs. Schwartz was so much moved by the misery of this wretched family that she could not endure it any longer, and after leaving them some money we went out together with a sigh of relief.

On the following day we were walking in the park opposite the Imperial Theatre, and I noticed that two well dressed men were discussing us. Finally, one of them stopped me on the pretext of asking me for a match and questioned me as to what we were doing in Russia.

He told me that he was a Communist and the Governor of a province. I had heard of him before, but do not think it wise to use his name. The Governor and his friend were greatly interested in the conditions of America, so I told him as briefly as I could of the position of the Socialists and of the Labor movement when I left.

"Are you a Communist?" he asked, and in

Digitized by Google

reply I told him that I had come to Russia as a representative of the Socialist Party of America.

"Do you believe in the Communist Government as you have seen it in Russia?"

"That is a pretty direct question to ask of a stranger," I said, "and it is difficult to answer it offhand."

"Well, if you are still doubtful as to what Communism means, I will tell you. Let me ask you if you believe in God?"

"I have never heard of a man being hung for that," I answered. "Yes, I do. Are all the Communists atheists?"

"Look here," he went on, "you are representing the Socialist Party from America, and I want to ask you if you believe in a government that does not allow you free speech, free press and a free religion."

I was afraid to commit myself, so I said, "Do you mean to tell me that the Soviet Government means the opposite of that?"

He did not answer but pulled out from his pocket a little chain with a cross attached. "Look at this," he exclaimed. "My mother

Digitized by Google

gave me this when I was a little boy and told me to wear it always. She is religious and is greatly hurt because I never go to church with her any longer. As a member of the Communist Government I have to hide this cross as if it were a crime, and I don't dare be seen entering a church with her. It might mean the end of my position and the end of me. Do you think that is right?"

I refused to answer, and the Governor's friend asked him why he insisted so strongly on knowing what I thought.

"I want his answer," he insisted, and again repeated, "Is that right?"

I suspected that the man was a spy; but I admitted that it was both wrong and very foolish if it was true.

"That is what Bolshevism is," he went on. "They have broken up our lives, our church, and I, who am the Governor of a province and a Communist myself, do not hesitate to tell you that."

"If that is the case, the Government will have a hard road to travel," I replied, and turned my back on him and walked away. I

Digitized by Google

was afraid that it was a trap that had been laid for me, for I felt certain that Madame Balabanova had reported my lack of interest in the official ceremonies on the trip and my habit of investigating conditions personally. Later, I became convinced that the man was sincere, since Russia is full of extraordinary contrasts. I do not doubt that there are many men who are in high positions in the Bolshevist Government who are bitterly opposed to the methods Lenin uses in forcing it on the country.

Coming back from this curious meeting, we passed the building occupied by the Extraordinary Commission, which literally holds the life of every Russian in its hand, for it can condemn a man to prison or to death without publicity and without trial. Its spies are everywhere, and the three men who are in arbitrary control of the system are more feared than was the Czar's Chief of Police before the revolution. On the steps of the building I saw a group of women surrounding a young woman who was crying bitterly. A soldier came up to them and asked them roughly to

Digitized by Google

move on, so I asked one of them what the trouble was.

"You see the poor girl who is crying," she answered. "She lives near me, and last night her husband ran away from the camp where he was stationed, about thirty miles from Moscow. They had not been married for very long. He came in about one o'clock, and at three some one knocked at the door. When it was not opened immediately, soldiers broke it in with their rifles, ordered him to dress, searched the house and took him away with them. This morning his wife tried to find him at the prison, and then came here. One of the Commissars told her that he had been shot at dawn."

This is but one of the scattered incidents that happen in the capital of Russia today under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

On another day I passed by a hospital which received sick and wounded soldiers from the front. One of the men told me that before daybreak that morning, fifty men had been shot in the yard at the back of one of the buildings. The Government had suddenly ar-

Digitized by Google

rested thirty-nine soldiers and eleven doctors on the charge that the doctors had been receiving money from soldiers to declare them unfit for service in the army, while the soldiers had been shot for bribery. He said that one of the men who had no money to free himself from the army by this means had reported this to the Extraordinary Commission, who had arrested every one involved and had killed them without trial on the following morning. I asked several people if they knew anything about this incident, and finally the street sweeper, a woman, informed me that early in the morning a truck had driven up to the hospital and had been loaded with barrels. She had been able to see into one of them, which had been packed with dead bodies.

Everyone knows that these sudden and mysterious executions are carried out every day. The Bolshevist official paper, the "Pravda," admitted in July that in fifty-six days, eight hundred people had been shot in Moscow alone, a daily average of fifteen to sixteen executions. Is it any wonder that the very air of Moscow seems filled with suspicion and

Digitized by Google

fear? A great part of the population is driven by hunger to commit acts that are in direct opposition to the theories on which the Communist Government rests. Moscow is a cemetery, a nest of every disease, where misery and starvation stand behind every man who is not one of the elect, and no man can appeal to justice, for neither justice nor mercy exist.

During one of these days while we were waiting for the Third International to open its session in Petrograd, we drove out to visit Prince Peter Kropotkin, the famous old anarchist, who was perhaps one of Russia's greatest men. He has died since then and he was very old and weak when we saw him. He was reclining in a big invalid's chair, dressed in a morning coat. He coughed a good deal while we were there, and I was certain that he would not live long. We conversed in English, which he spoke as well as he did Russian.

Prince Kropotkin asked me not to quote him while I was in Russia, and after I had promised that I would not do so, he went on to say that he had returned to his own country

Digitized by Google

almost at the same time that Lenin came in through Germany in March, 1917.

"When I saw Lenin and the others who had gathered around him," he said, "I knew that my country would bleed under their management; and I was right. I knew that they would bring misery and confusion with them.

"Now I am too old and sick to do anything more for my people, but if I could live my life over again I would fight Bolshevism to the bitter end. It is now the duty of you who are still safe from it to do your share. I have done all I could do for humanity. That is all I have to say."

After a long silence, he went on, "I am sorry that I cannot offer you any hospitality, but we have nothing in the house but tea without sugar and a little bread and fish." I thanked him and told him that we delegates had more to eat than we wanted.

"Yes," he said, "it is not changed. One man still gets four meals a day and another one. That is not what those who came before us gave their lives for. When you return to the United States, tell them what old Kropot-

Digitized by Google

kin said to you, and if you pass through England, give that country my best wishes, for I am very fond of England and the English people."

There was another silence, and my wife, who had been greatly impressed by what he had said, nodded to me and we went out together.

When we returned to Moscow, I found a notice waiting for me at the hotel, to prepare for the journey to Petrograd, since the convention was to open immediately. We expected to leave on the next day, but it was finally five days before word was sent us that the train was ready. The other delegates were waiting also, and were very much disturbed by the delay. It was rumored that there had been a general strike on the railroads which had tied up all the trains and that the wires were also down.

We finally left Moscow quietly, in automobiles that were separated from each other by several blocks. I presume that they feared that some demonstration might be made against us. Several hundred delegates and

Digitized by Google

Commissars finally arrived at the almost deserted station, where we found the two special trains decorated with red flags. The foreign delegates and the Russian representatives were placed in separate trains. After an unexplained delay of several hours we started, and did not stop until we arrived in Petrograd, although when we passed stations along the route the train slowed down while the soldiers who were lined up along the platform cheered us.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL—WE ARE ARRESTED

THE reception we received in Petrograd excelled anything we had seen in Russia.

When we left the station after nine o'clock, the broad Nevsky Prospect was massed with people as far as the eye could reach. They packed every window and were standing on the roofs. We drove between solid lines of soldiers, passing regiments of artillery and cavalry, as if we were attending a military review. Bands marched in front of us playing the "Internationale," but their music was drowned by the roars of the crowds. Everywhere were banners with "Welcome to the World Delegates" on them.

At last we arrived at the building in which the meetings of the Duma were formerly held, and which had now become the center of world revolution. The delegates were seated in the

Digitized by Google

great assembly hall, while the important Communists and Government Commissars, who were not delegates to the Congress, were in the balcony above. On the desk before each delegate were portfolios and pencils, and a leather covered notebook printed in gold with "Second Congress of the Third International." The Bureau of Propaganda had not neglected this opportunity. The desks were covered with pamphlets and photographs of government officers, palaces and graves and martyrs, and even the morning paper, with glowing descriptions of the events of the day. We waited for about three hours for the arrival of Lenin, who was to open the first session, but delays of this nature are expected in Russia, where official business often begins late in the afternoon and is continued until late at night. The Hall was badly ventilated and it soon became unbearably hot. Lenin arrived shortly after one, and took his seat behind the rostrum on the platform. Everyone rose and cheered him wildly for five minutes. Zinoviev, the International President of the Communist Party, began the proceedings of the day.

Digitized by Google

"In the name of the Central Executive Committee of the Government of Russia," he said, "I declare that the work of the Second Congress of the Third International will now begin. Red Petrograd has opened its arms to receive the best fighters and the best blood of the Proletariat of the World."

He went on to speak of the martyrs that had fallen in the struggle during the first and second revolution. He spoke of the death of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg of Germany, and others of their comrades who had been imprisoned by the capitalistic class throughout the world. As he spoke of the well-known Communists who had fallen in Russia and abroad, everyone rose while the music played a few strains of a funeral march. It was a very impressive ceremony, for these men who were in charge of the Government of Russia had learned the value of dramatic effects of this kind.

When we were seated, Zinoviev went on to describe what he called the "War of the Capitalists" of 1914. It had been brought on, he declared, by the rivalry between the capital-

Digitized by Google

ists of Germany and England to control the finances and industry of the world. It had brought the impoverishment of entire nations and led to the destruction of twenty million lives.

"We, the Communists of the world," he said, "will make it certain that there will be no more wars of that kind." He went on for about twenty minutes to prove that revolution and Communism could alone save humanity. He was interpreted in German by Karl Radek, Secretary of the Third International, while Madame Balabanova addressed us in French and Italian.

Zinoviev then introduced Kalinin, President of the Peasants and Workers Soviets, who welcomed us in the name of the workmen and peasants of Russia. He spoke of the solidarity of the proletariat of the country and of their determination to fight to the end for world Communism. "We who represent the masses of other nations, ought to unite with them and strike the final blow against capitalism," he declared, "and then establish a world-wide Communist government."

Digitized by Google

After he finished, Bukharin, a member of the National Executive Council, followed him and proposed the names of members to preside at the Congress. Comrade Levi of Germany, Comrade Rosner of France, Comrade Serrati of Italy, and Lenin and Zinoviev of Russia, were unanimously accepted without debate, and it became apparent from the first that the delegates were supposed to follow a pre-arranged program.

Nikolai Lenin was then introduced by Zinoviev. "I will call upon the greatest man of today, Comrade Lenin," he announced. Lenin stood up and the cheering broke out again while the band burst into the familiar "Internationale."

The Dictator of Russia is one of the shrewdest men in the world, and he is not above playing to the gallery. When he had first entered the hall, a blind workingman who had lost his eyes in one of the electrical plants in Petrograd was introduced to him. In the sight of all of us he had embraced him and kissed him several times. He had shown us one side of his character, his humility and his

Digitized by Google

feeling of brotherhood for men in humble positions. But it was another Lenin who spoke to us from the platform—intelligent, well-read, and logical, a man of iron will. He spoke without notes and without a single pause for an hour and a quarter, principally on international affairs, and the futile efforts of the politicians of the capitalist nations to bring order after the war. He spoke with bitter irony of Woodrow Wilson and the Fourteen Points, and of the proceedings at the Versailles Conference. He left nothing out. The efforts of Lloyd George and the German militaristic autocracy to stay in power, the crimes of American capitalism, the human lives thrown away in the war for the benefit of bankers, lawyers and politicians. He spoke also about the debt of Russia to English capitalists.

"Of course," he said, laughing, "we won't pay, and we told them that we are not going to pay. The people did not receive the money. They will have to get it from the Czar who is responsible for it." He laughed again and everyone joined in with him.

Digitized by Google

After his speech, which was, of course, the great feature of the meeting, a band played the "Internationale" again, and the Congress was adjourned.

We were to hold the next meeting in Moscow, we were told, in a few days, although the exact date was not mentioned.

We filed out of the beautiful hall, and were met outside by a dense crowd of people. While we were trying to force our way through, for the police system seemed to have entirely broken down, my wife was literally torn away from me and it was impossible to turn back to find her.

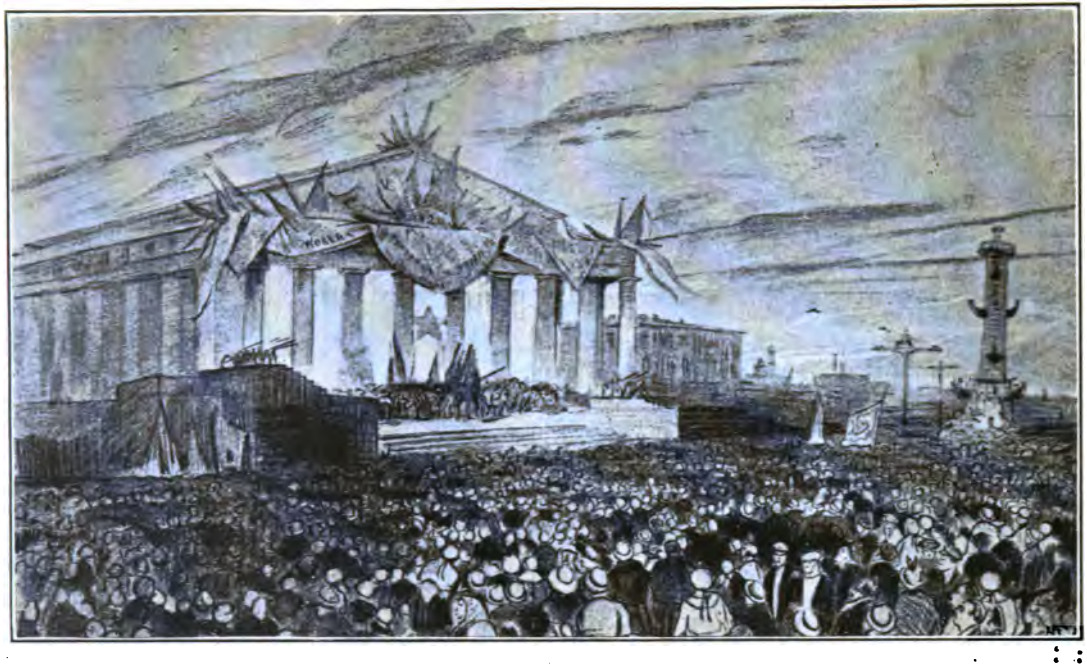
An immense parade was formed and the delegates, thousands of workingmen, and women and children marched through the streets with innumerable bands playing a funeral march, until we came to the square where the martyrs of the second revolution had been buried. I presume that their graves were being decorated, but I was hemmed in by the crowd and it was impossible to see anything. Airplanes flew over our heads, firing their machine guns as a salute. Then the

Digitized by Google

crowd formed a line again and we marched to the great open space in front of the Exchange Building. On the immense sweep of marble steps a spectacle had been arranged, in which fifteen thousand people took part. In the dazzling light of countless searchlights, we saw the Czar seated on a throne surrounded by members of the court and generals, then a red star was raised over the heads of the actors. Thousands of workmen and common soldiers hurled themselves at the steps and tore down the throne and the imperial decorations in the background. Then came the second revolution, and gradually the Communist state was evolved, and a fine pageant was staged showing the triumph of the proletariat, and the prosperity of the united workers of the world.

When I returned to the train, I was disturbed and frightened because my wife had not yet come in, but in a few moments, she appeared, worn out with her efforts to fight her way through the crowd. She had gotten lost and had had great difficulty in finding the station. The poor woman had been worried

Digitized by Google



PETROGRAD. THE GREAT SOVIET PAGEANT ON THE STEPS OF THE OLD EXCHANGE, JULY 19, 1920

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

about me and cried with happiness when she saw me waiting for her in the compartment.

After we returned to Moscow, there was another long delay before the second meeting of the Congress was opened. Nearly all of the delegates were anxious to get back to their respective countries as soon as they could, and although we discussed the matter endlessly and sent committees to call upon the Government, everyone seemed to be in complete ignorance about the date set for the opening. There were rumors flying about of revolutionary plots and projects to dynamite the assembly. But finally, we were informed by the Commandant that he was ready to supply us with new passes for entering the Kremlin, where the Congress was to be held. Finally, on the 27th of July, we were admitted through the doors of the Andrievsky Palace in the Kremlin. Each of us had been previously put through a strict cross-examination, and had been forced to show our passes again and again. It was easy to see that the Government had become very nervous and apprehensive of some outbreak, or perhaps of an

Digitized by Google

attempt to assassinate Lenin. In the palace itself we were examined again, and our passes were inspected three times before we were allowed into the Hall. All of these excessive precautions, together with the soldiers armed with rifles and bayonets, whom we passed at every step, alarmed some of the delegates greatly. Whether the fears of the authorities were justified or not, it is certain that nothing occurred during the next eleven days in which the Congress met, to disturb us.

There was an entirely different atmosphere in the second session of the Congress from the noisy demonstration in Petrograd. Lenin appeared as soon as we were seated, followed by Trotsky, Commanding General of the Russian Army, and the meeting was immediately opened by Zinoviev. There was no cheering, and even the band had been suppressed; the business of the meeting proceeded in a quite determined fashion. There were no visitors, only the delegates and the officers of the Government who were guests of the Third International, nearly all of them members of the Central Executive Committee. Committees

Digitized by Google

were appointed for ways and means, propaganda, etc. The Congress had decided the proceedings should be conducted in Russian, German and French, but John Reed protested vigorously. He insisted that the proceedings should be carried on in English also, and in spite of the fact that the matter had already been decided by vote, the chairman answered him in French and told him that he would have to put his protest in writing, but Reed kept on protesting loudly.

"I want you to understand," he cried, "that there are twenty-nine English-speaking delegates present, and in their names I demand that you listen to me in my own tongue."

Shouts of protest arose from every side, and for a while I felt certain that he would be arrested and thrown out of the Hall, but John Reed had made himself an important and powerful figure in Russian politics, and had made them believe that he was the leader of a powerful Communist party which he had founded in the United States. Even Lenin attempted to stop him, but Reed pounded on the table with his fist and demanded that the

Digitized by Google

vote should be taken again. It was finally carried by a small majority that the meeting would be conducted in four languages, Russian, French, German and English.

The Congress closed on August 7th, and more than one of the delegates breathed a sigh of relief, for it had grown extremely monotonous, principally on account of our ignorance of each other's language, and the necessity of listening to long speeches and reports which had to be interpreted over and over again. The individual committees met apart from the general assemblies, and on each day a different report was brought up and discussed and voted upon. The most interesting discussion arose over the question of propaganda, for their program was enormous in extent, consisting of an attempt to spread Communist doctrines into the working classes of every country in the world.

It was decided to make a special effort to find converts to Communism in the trades unions of England and America, and arrangements were made to distribute vast quantities of literature, mostly pamphlets, which were

Digitized by Google

to be translated into every language and sent to the different countries by means of secret agents. As far as possible, workmen were to be instructed in actual revolution by suggesting means of obtaining arms, and were to organize themselves after the model of the Red Army in Russia. Wherever it was possible, the Russian army itself was to be used to aid their fellow workers in other countries after their revolution had been started.

After the meetings, we occasionally took lunch in the palace, with Lenin, Radek, Zinoviev and Trotsky usually present. Only a few delegates were present at the meetings in the evening, which occasionally lasted until very late. After listening all the morning to long debates in languages we could not understand, we were usually too worn out to think of going through it again during the same day. Besides the monotony of which I have already spoken, the Executive Committee of the Congress ruled the meetings with an iron hand, and as every detail was thoroughly planned in advance, there was no opportunity for an individual to express himself. The

Digitized by Google

steam roller which the Russians knew how to apply so successfully to their own Soviet meetings was applied to us, and no one dared to say a word that did not fit in with the pre-conceived scheme of the Committee.

One day when I came back to the hotel with my wife, I was met by five German delegates. One of them asked me, since I spoke Russian myself, to tell him all I could of the Russian Government, and to give him some idea of my opinion of the feelings of the country as a whole concerning the Bolshevists. The spokesman for the party told me that their ignorance of Russian had made them feel there was a great deal in the situation they had not been able to grasp. I answered that I had nothing to tell them, and that as there were plenty of interpreters who spoke their language, it would be best for them to investigate themselves. I felt that I could not express myself enthusiastically enough to convince them that I was in favor of Communism. Whether they reported to the Government what I had told them, I do not know. Although I had not committed myself in any

Digitized by Google

way, I became still more uneasy about my position.

A short time before this, another incident had happened to add to my uncertainty. While we were in the dining car, going from Petrograd to Moscow, Boris Reinstein, a naturalized American, who had worked for many years for the Socialist Party in America, and who had gone to Russia on the outbreak of Bolshevism, asked me in the presence of other delegates, to tell him all that I could about the Communist Party in America. Reinstein was at that time attached to Lenin's office and was very much in the confidence of the members of the Committee of the International. I told him, what I knew to be true, that the Communists in America were limited in number, and after John Reed had left for Russia it had almost completely dissolved as a party. I have already explained that it was partly due to Reed that the Socialist Party of the United States was split at the convention held in Chicago in 1919, and that Reed's power in Russia was largely due to the fact that he represented himself as the leader of a

Digitized by Google

powerful movement which might in the end succeed in overturning the Government of the United States.

As soon as he heard what I had said, Reinstein hurried into another car and brought John Reed back with him. He asked me point blank if it was true that I had said that there was no Communist Party in America.

"I told Reinstein that there are Communists in America, but no Communist Party," I replied, "and you know that that is true."

Reed became extremely angry and left me without another word, but after that incident he never spoke to me again, and I realized that I had unwisely made him my enemy. His dislike of us grew so pointed, that one day when my wife asked him to escort her to one of the meetings of the labor council, without any explanation, he definitely refused to do so. During my stay in Russia it was obvious that Reed was fanatically and violently attached to Communist ideals and there was no question about the power that he exercised over the lesser members of the Communist Party. In addition to his position in the Bolshevist Gov-

Digitized by Google

ernment, he was also a member of the Executive Board of the International Communist Party, and it had been decided during one of the propaganda meetings of the Congress, that John Reed was to go to Canada and from there to the United States to conduct a propaganda campaign, taking with him Communist literature.

Everywhere, I found the impression had been created that the Communists had overthrown the Socialist Party in America, and had become so great an influence in American politics that the Government itself had become terrified, and Reed was naturally mentioned as the one who had been responsible for this change. The fact that the American Government was taking very strict measures against the Communists in the United States was used to back up this theory.

Alexander Stoslitsky, another American who was prominent at the meetings of the Congress, had been influential in creating this false opinion of the strength of Communism in America. Since John Reed's death, he has, I believe, taken up his work and has been

Digitized by Google

lately in Reval, where he has been conducting a propaganda campaign.

Another disturbing incident had given me warning that I was not in favor with the Communist officials. One morning at one of the sessions of the Congress, Trotsky asked me when the "Yellows" would turn Red in America, that is to say, when would the Socialists become radical enough to attempt to overthrow the Government. I answered him that I expected that the United States Government would be the last country in the world to follow Communist principles.

Reed, who had been listening attentively, jumped to his feet immediately. "Why do you say that, Schwartz?" he shouted.

"Jack," I replied, "you know perfectly well, and so does Comrade Trotsky, that all labor cannot be classed in the United States in one mass, since it is really divided into many groups. There are workmen there who earn anywhere from three to eight dollars a day for eight hours work. You may be able to persuade the common laborer earning a minimum wage to take up a gun and a red

Digitized by Google

flag and start a revolution, but how can you persuade a man who is making eight dollars a day, a man with a family, with a home which he perhaps owns himself, and with children attending school, to listen to you when you talk to him about revolution? What would he say about that?

"Let me ask you if you think that the capitalist class is asleep in America? If you do, you are bitterly mistaken. They are awake and they see every move that is going on here and there. Therefore, I repeat that America is likely to be the last country that will become Communist." I saw that it was unwise to continue this argument, so I left the Hall immediately, and later, after I had left Russia, heard that Zinoviev had told the delegates when I was not present, that it would not be wise to listen to me, stating that mentally I was capitalistic, and that I could not be trusted.

In the meantime, I visited the Office of Foreign Affairs and asked for a passport to leave the country as soon as the Congress finished, but I know now that orders had been given

Digitized by Google

to watch me carefully. For two or three days I went there constantly, and always it was the same story: "We will have it for you when you call again." Finally I went to see Tchicherin himself, but I could only see his secretary. I complained to him of my failure to get a passport, but could get nothing satisfactory out of him.

That night we attended the last evening meeting of the Congress, which was held in the Imperial Theatre. Officers were elected for the next meeting, or rather they were proposed and voted on without comment. John Reed became a delegate from the United States, Serrati from Italy, and Sadoul from France.

We reached the hotel at about eleven o'clock, and after a late supper with the delegates in the dining room, my wife went back to her room to go to bed. While I was talking to one of the English delegates, three soldiers with revolvers in their hands burst into the dining room, walked straight up to me, and asked me if I was Comrade Schwartz. I admitted it, and was told that I was under arrest. I asked them if this was a practical joke.

Digitized by Google

Everyone around me was so astonished that they could hardly speak.

"What charges have you against me?" I demanded.

"You are under arrest by order of the Extraordinary Commission," said one of them. "You are to come with us quietly to your room."

My wife was so frightened when we entered together that I tried to laugh the matter off.

"Mother, we are arrested," I said.

She did not believe me and asked what the soldiers were doing in the room. Finally I convinced her that it was true, and tried to make her believe that it was only a formality and was nothing to worry about.

They began to cross-examine me. Two soldiers were stationed out in the hall to keep everyone out of the room, and the officer who questioned me sat at the table with a notebook in which he took down all of my replies.

My valise was opened, my clothes were searched, and they also took out my pocketbook and searched me for letters. One of the soldiers who seemed to know his business well, cut the lining of my coat; they even looked

Digitized by Google

under the beds, in fact they neglected nothing, even cutting open the mattresses and the upholstery on the chairs, and taking the lining out of my hat to see if there were any papers hidden inside. All my money was taken from me, including over a thousand dollars in American gold. I was asked how long I had been in Moscow, to what party I belonged, where I got my money, if I had met any European officers or had spoken with Polish officers on the border, and whether I had had any communication with the United States while I had been in Russia.

This fruitless searching and questioning took them until five o'clock in the morning, and my wife became so exhausted before the end of it, that she asked to be allowed to sleep. We were both under a terrific strain.

The authorities who had been responsible for my arrest knew that I was not a spy and that I was exactly what I reported myself to be. They knew that I was guiltless of any action against the Bolshevist Government in Russia, but they were aware that my attitude toward their government had been unsympa-

Digitized by Google

thetic, and that in itself constituted a crime. They knew that I had investigated conditions in Russia on my own account, while I should have accepted the word of their paid interpreters and spies. And for this, my wife and I were put in prison for four long months.

My wife's reputation as a Socialist worker in the United States was also known to them, and that she had given eighteen years of her life to that cause. Whatever their reason was for punishing me, it was certainly needless and brutal cruelty to treat her in the same way. To imprison a woman of fifty, a stranger to their country, who could not speak their language, in their foul jails, without trial, was almost a death sentence. They knew that and they did not care. The life of Jessie Schwartz was sacrificed for no reason whatever. If I had been guilty of the worst treason, she would have still been the innocent victim of one of the most despotic and cruel governments that the world has ever seen, the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X

PRISON LIFE

WE were taken in a motor car with the same guard who had arrested us, to the prison of the Extraordinary Commission on Lubenka Street.

Lubenka No. 2, as it is known in Moscow, was formerly a hotel, and is built around a great square courtyard. All the rooms facing this courtyard are used as prison cells, while the rooms facing the streets have been converted into officers' barracks. During the weeks which I spent there, I satisfied myself that it was utterly impossible to escape. Soldiers were stationed at the doors and paced up and down corridors with rifles and bayonets. The sentries were constantly making the circuit of the square under our windows, which were all above the ground floor. In addition, officers were stationed in the court-

Digitized by Google

yard to prevent the guards from communicating with the prisoners.

We reached the prison a little after five o'clock in the morning, and there the tiresome examination was continued by the commandant in charge. We were searched again for concealed papers or money, and I was ordered to give him a ring that I wore, which was too tight for me. One of the soldiers nearly broke my finger in his efforts to wrench it off.

The only thing that my wife still possessed of any value, was a small pin which her mother had given her when she died and which she had worn for thirty years. The soldiers wanted to take it from her, but she refused to give it up and began to cry. I tried to tell the soldiers what it meant to her, but they insisted they must have it.

"I am not going to give it up, Mitri," she said. "I have kept it for thirty years and they will have to kill me if they want it."

I tried to calm her. "There is no use in making them angry, Mother. If you take things easily we may be here only for a few

Digitized by Google

hours, and I will get it back for you when we are free." But she wouldn't listen to me and pressed it with both hands tight against her breast. The soldier was holding his revolver in his right hand, and with his left tried to force her hands down. She cried out with pain, and suddenly turned on him, outraged at this indignity to a woman old enough to be his mother, tore one of her hands free and slapped his face. In an instant the man dropped his revolver and struck her on the mouth with his fist.

"Mitri!" she cried, and turned to show me the blood running from her lips.

For a moment I saw red, and in spite of the efforts of another soldier to prevent me, threw myself in front of her.

I can remember shouting, "Let her alone, you dog! What do you mean by striking a woman! You ought to be shot for this!"

The Commissar had gone into another room, but rushed back when he heard my shouts. I begged him not to let the men hurt her, for Jessie, her eyes bright with anger, was still clasping the pin to her breast. I told him

Digitized by Google

that she was an American and didn't understand why the soldier was so brutal. "We are delegates to the convention," I said, "not thieves or spies or counter-revolutionists. We have done nothing and we may be released in a few hours. Tell your men to leave her alone."

He motioned to the soldier, who stood back sullenly. "She can keep it, it isn't worth anything, anyhow." He gave another order, and a guard seized my wife's arm.

"You are not going to take her away from me!" I cried. "For God's sake let us go together. She doesn't understand, she will be lost here." Just as she reached the door, Jessie pulled back for a moment and smiled at me. She had stopped crying and her old courage had come back to her.

"Good-bye, Mitri," she said quietly. "Perhaps it won't be for long." She gave me a final smile and disappeared through the door

I was so torn with grief and anger at that last sight of her that I hardly knew what they were doing to me or where they were taking

Digitized by Google

me. Finally I was pushed into a room, the door was slammed and bolted behind me. It was a small room of about fifteen feet by twenty, with one window, and in it were three men who looked at me curiously, and began immediately to ask me who I was and why I had been arrested. I answered them briefly and looked about me. There were four wooden benches, each with a dirty, straw mattress. There was no other furniture, and no blankets or pillows, towels or soap—not a book, not a paper. My companions were pale and dirty. One of them was sick. The youngest of them said he had been there four months. I told them that I was sure that they would only hold me for a few days, but the sick man, who coughed constantly, laughed bitterly.

"God knows I don't wish you any hard luck," he said, "but it is not as easy to get out of here as you think. I have been here ten months, and I am beginning to think that I will never leave here alive."

I felt a cold chill go through me. In ten months what would become of my wife? I fell into a moody silence that must have lasted

Digitized by Google

for hours, and the next thing I was conscious of was being given a miserable plate of thick cabbage soup and a small piece of fish. The smell of this fish was so vile that I could not believe that a human being could stomach it, but my fellow prisoners devoured my share as well as their own eagerly. A lump of wet, sour black bread completed the meal and almost nauseated me when I tried to eat it.

"You will get over it," I was told. "It takes a little time, but after a few days you will feel that you could eat a piece of shoe leather."

Supper consisted simply of a plate of soup, which I failed to eat for the same reason, and which was carefully divided by my three companions. Night came on, but I could not sleep. All day I had been expecting that I would be taken out for some kind of a hearing, and I was terribly worried about my wife, for I did not see how she could go through with it for long. She had not been well for some time, and I thought that the dreadful food and above all, her desperate loneliness in this strange place where she would be unable to

Digitized by Google

understand anything that was said, would drive her frantic.

On the next morning an officer came in and asked if anyone had any complaint to make. I told him that I had only one—that I wanted to see my wife for a moment. He refused, and one of the prisoners jeered at me.

"You must think that you are in America," he laughed. "If you think that you are going to get out of here today or tomorrow, you are mistaken, and you had better make up your mind to it now." So I waited.

The third day I was so hungry that I tried to swallow the horrible soup which was brought into me at noon, and managed to get it down with some of the sour bread. It served the purpose at least of keeping me alive. On the next morning, since there was still no sign that any one in the world outside remembered my existence, I wrote to Tchicherin, the Commissar of Foreign Affairs, and to Lenin. A week passed and there was no answer. I seemed to have dropped out of sight and out of the world as if I had never existed. The guards did not speak to us when they brought

Digitized by Google

us our food, and we four men were silent hours at a time, sitting on our benches, staring abjectly at the walls, or pacing up and down the room as if we were animals in a cage. The monotony was almost unbearable. There was absolutely nothing to do but go over and over again in our minds our unhappy memories.

We were not even allowed to look out of the window, where at least there was the sight of blue sky and sunshine. After two weeks I became so ill that I begged the guard to take me to the hospital, but I was told gruffly that there was no hospital and that I would have to stay there. The conditions were terrible. The window was shut tight, so that the atmosphere was stifling. Finally, a fifth man was crowded into the room, and that night the young man who had been there for four months was taken out. After this the changes were frequent, except for the sick man, whose condition had become alarming. Usually, the guard would come for them after midnight, and now and then, if we listened attentively, their visit would be followed by a shot. Sometimes we heard as many as a dozen muffled

Digitized by Google

reports. The death squad was at work, executing those who had been convicted by the Extraordinary Commission.

Sometimes one of the prisoners would break into a long, feverish recital of his grievances against the Government, telling us the most intimate details of his life, as if he was unable any longer to keep his thoughts to himself. Then suddenly he would stop and begin his monotonous pace around the room. Four steps and then a turn, backward and forward, hour after hour.

About once a month the prisoners were taken to a bath-house several miles from the prison, marching to it in a line, heavily guarded. Each of us was given not more than thirty minutes to bathe and try to wash our linen before we were pushed out into the street through another exit and marched back to the prison. For a sick man it was a terrible ordeal, and I was told that in winter many of the prisoners caught consumption on going out into the bitter cold, insufficiently clothed, after the moist heat and steam of the bath.

The sick man told us that he had been ar-

Digitized by Google

rested for being involved in a counter-revolutionary movement, as the secretary of a secret organization. This organization had decided to assassinate Trotsky; two men had been selected and had attended a meeting at which Trotsky was present, where they threw a bomb into the crowd. Eight were killed and a number wounded.

But Trotsky was uninjured, and as he came out from the building, he said that for each life that had been taken a hundred men would be killed. During thirty days time, eight hundred had been executed by the Extraordinary Commission. The secretary of the organization had been arrested and expected as a matter of course to be shot, but they had kept him alive in the hope of a confession, and now they seemed to have forgotten his existence.

At first he had been put into a black cell in the basement, where he had to lie down on the cement floor which was covered with an inch of filthy water. The air in this place, he said, was so damp and foul from the sewer pipes that it was impossible to breathe it without

Digitized by Google

choking. After three days they took him out in a fainting condition and placed him in the room where I met him. This man was about thirty years old, but his hair was gray, and he had become so weak it was impossible for him to walk across the room without falling. We were all sorry for him, for he was an intelligent and courageous man, a graduate of the University of Moscow.

Later they had tried to force him to confess the names of all the men associated with him in the secret society. He had been taken down to the basement; his clothes were stripped from him, and he was faced with a firing squad of revolvers. "This is your last chance," the officer said. Then he slowly counted three times before he gave the command of fire.

The men fired, but they shot over his head, and the poor wretch fell to the floor unconscious. Several times this happened to him, and finally his nerves were so shattered that he could not endure it any longer, and when once more after many months of this mental agony, he was taken out again to be shot, he suddenly broke down and confessed the names

Digitized by Google

of everyone who had been involved with him.

Later on they had come to him with an offer to release him if he would be willing to serve as a spy for the Extraordinary Commission.

"No," he told them. "I have betrayed my comrades, but I will not betray my country. I would rather die where I am than serve you."

One morning the door opened, and a man about thirty years of age came in and said that he had been arrested in Petrograd, and that the charge against him was treason. He told us that he expected to be shot within a few days, and he was so nervous that he could neither sleep nor eat. This was his story:

"I was the station master of a small town near the border of Finland. My wife and I were allowing men whom we knew to be counter-revolutionists and spies across the border. At last it was discovered and a trap was laid for us. A detective of the Extraordinary Commission came to see me, and said that he had escaped from prison and must cross into Finland. The man had letters of introduction from others whom I had recently

Digitized by Google

passed over the border, so I let him go. On the next day he returned with soldiers, arrested both of us, and brought us to Moscow."

Since there was no question of our new companion's guilt, we felt certain that there was no hope for him. It was pitiful to watch him; every time the door opened, the poor fellow would turn as pale as a ghost; at night he couldn't sleep, and at the slightest noise would scream with fright. Although his case was more perilous than that of the rest of us, we were all of us in constant terror of the sudden midnight visits of the guards. The suspense was enough to shatter the strongest nerves. Fortunately, his wife's brother happened to be in a position of some importance with the Government, Head Commissar of Fuel. In a few days a package of food and clothing was brought in to him, with a letter from his brother-in-law, and two days later he was released. It was a fair example of Communist justice. My wife and I, who had done nothing, were left in prison without trial, while this man, who was actually guilty of plotting the Government's overthrow, was released because

Digitized by Google

his wife's brother was a minor Government official.

On another occasion, a Pole, and a young Austrian of nineteen, who had been taken prisoner six years before, became our companions in misery for a time. The poor Austrian boy had never learned to speak Russian, though he had been arrested in 1914 for carrying provisions across the Russian front and had been sent to Siberia, where he was held in a miserable prison camp until 1918. When the camp was broken up he tried to reach home, and with incredible hardship had worked his way westward from town to town, until his clothes were in tatters. On the outskirts of Moscow he had been picked up by a detachment of Red Guards. He was accused of being a spy and was sent to our jail without any investigation.

The Pole had been a representative of his government at Baku. He had been in the city when it was captured, and said that without any provocation, hundreds of unarmed people had been massacred in the streets by the Red troops. Instead of being killed, as he had

Digitized by Google

expected, he was imprisoned in a small cell in a Baku jail with fifteen other men, where the rations consisted of one bowl of soup and half a pound of bread a day. He contracted consumption from one of his companions and was coughing blood when he was with us in Moscow. I tried to get him released, and sent word to the Commissar that he was too ill to stay with us. On the next day he was examined by a doctor in the office and sent back to us again with the report that there was nothing much the matter with him. He stayed with us for a month, getting constantly weaker, when he was suddenly taken away. What his fate was I never learned.

And so the days passed in the same deadly monotony. I wrote many letters to members of the Government, and finally, when there was no response, I gave up hope, expecting every day to be taken out and shot. I began to lose weight terribly, and realized that it would be impossible for me to live through many more months of this existence. My only desire was that my wife should be released

Digitized by Google

to go home to our children again. At least they would then know what my fate had been.

One night shortly after midnight, the door was flung open and my name was called. An officer with a revolver entered, followed by two soldiers carrying rifles. My companions were panic-stricken until they realized that it was Schwartz who was wanted. I could hardly move from fright, but at last I got control of myself. I can remember stammering out, "Good-bye. This is my last journey. I am going to be killed."

I shuffled out into the corridor with them, and as we came to the stairway the suspense became terrible; for I knew that if we went down it would be to the cellars, where the executions were held. The officer reached the head of the stairs and I clutched the guard's arm to steady myself. But the officer turned around to grin at me, and walked straight ahead. He knew well enough what I was feeling. My strength came back to me miraculously and I walked ahead in a daze, and suddenly I found myself confronting a tall man in uniform.

"What is your name?" he asked.

Digitized by Google

"Dmitri Alexander Schwartz," I answered weakly.

"Sit down, comrade," he said in a friendly voice.

I took a seat near him, and suddenly was aware that I was shaking violently as if I had taken a chill.

"Your case has been brought up for examination," he said, "and we have found that we have made a serious mistake. It was suspected that you were a spy and counter-revolutionist, but now you are to be liberated and you can return to the United States when you want."

"That is good. I am glad," I answered. "Where is my wife? I haven't seen her for over two months."

"She is alive and will be here in a moment," he replied.

At last the door opened, and Jessie came in. The shock I received at seeing her was almost greater than my joy. She looked old and worn, years older than when I had seen her last, and her hair had turned very gray. For a moment she did not seem to recognize

Digitized by Google

me, for I had grown a beard, and was also emaciated from sickness and insufficient food. The poor woman sat down beside me without saying a word and took my hand as if she would never let it go again. I could think of nothing to say to her except "Don't cry, Mother," which I repeated over and over again.

"I haven't any tears left, Mitri," she said. "I have cried them all out in that horrible room back there. I thought you had been killed. Why have they kept us away from each other so long?"

"It is all right now," I told her. "We are free and can go home together."

"Thank God!" she cried, and put her arms around me and kissed me.

The officer who had been watching us carefully without interrupting us, now called the guard, and suddenly we were torn away from each other again.

"I can't go back to that place again," Jessie said. "I thought we were free."

I tried to calm her. "Just another day, only until we get our passports. Go back

Digitized by Google

quietly and don't worry. It is going to come out all right."

They dragged her off, protesting bitterly, and in a moment I was back again with my prison companions, who were all glad to see me, for they had been certain that my last hour had come. Two days later I was called out again. I said a final good-bye, and we embraced each other as if we had been brothers. Indeed, our common misery had linked us together until, in spite of my joy at the thought of freedom, it hurt me to leave them.

But in the corridor, instead of meeting my wife as I had hoped, I was put at the end of a line of prisoners under guard, and we were all marched to the office. To my amazement I recognized two of them, Pat Quinlin, an American I. W. W., and Nathan Schabro of New York. Quinlin said that he had written a letter to Ireland, in which he had said in Gaelic, "To hell with the Bolshevists," and that he supposed this was the cause of his sudden arrest. He could think of nothing else. Schabro seemed to think he was there because his brother was in the Police Depart-

Digitized by Google

ment in New York. It was strange to find three American delegates to the International in the same prison, for we had gone to Russia almost in the position of diplomatic envoys.

Suddenly I saw that my wife had been brought in, but when I tried to speak to her, a guard stopped me and shook his revolver at me. A numb of fear began to steal over me. Perhaps we were not free after all. This might be the beginning of new miseries.

The prisoners, about twenty of us, were marched into the courtyard, and I heard that we were to be taken to the railroad station.

"But where is our money and our passports?" my wife asked. "We can't leave without them."

I protested to the officer, who said that we would receive them at the station. But my wife refused to go without them. We were ordered to march, but still she would not move. Finally, two soldiers seized her by the arms and began to drag her along between them. I shouted at the officers to stop them. The man grew angry.

"Bring her along," he called to the sol-

Digitized by Google

diers. Then to me, "You are not going to the station. You are going to another jail, and after that we will bring you back here and give you everything that belongs to you."

I told my wife what he had said, and she began to scream at the officer, until I was frightened for fear that she had lost her mind.

But there was no help. The gates were thrown open and we found ourselves in the street. It was snowing outside, and it was bitterly cold. Many of us were half sick from hunger, yet we had to walk more than five miles through the night air to another prison at the other end of Moscow. After we had gone about two miles, my wife said that she was too tired to take another step, and that they could kill her right there if they wanted to.

I begged the officer to let her have a droshky, and all of us waited until one passed by. The officer requisitioned it and commanded the driver to take her to the prison. Evidently she had been hoping that the officer would let both of us ride together, and that perhaps we might find some way of escape,

Digitized by Google

for when she saw that one of the soldiers got in beside her instead of me, she suddenly began to struggle with him and succeeded in knocking his rifle out of his hands. The soldier cursed her violently and I was certain that he was going to shoot, so I shouted to the officer that she was not responsible for what she was doing. He told the soldier to stop, but after that my wife refused to ride and in spite of her fatigue managed to walk all the way to the prison.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI

FREEDOM—THE FINAL SACRIFICE

OUR second prison had been a monastery before the revolution. Around it was a high stone wall, four or five blocks square, with a chapel, a cemetery, and the monastery itself inside. Now it held five hundred prisoners, both men and women. Life was far more possible there than it had been in the prison on Lubenka Street, for we were allowed to walk around the yard during the day and even had newspapers and books to read. There were English, French, Germans, Jews, and Italians, besides Russians there, and as my wife was able to speak again in her own tongue and to see me once a day, she did not mind very much at first.

At seven o'clock in the morning the prisoners were aroused and given a cup of hot water for breakfast. At eight o'clock we were sent

Digitized by Google

out to work at such tasks as sweeping the yard, chopping and sawing wood, repairing the buildings and many other things. At twelve o'clock, when we had become so faint from hunger that we could hardly stand, a plate of soup and half a pound of the usual sour bread was given to us. At two o'clock we went back to work again until five. It was fatiguing and we were all in a desperate condition from hunger, but there was relief at least from the dreadful monotony of our previous life. Many of the prisoners had curious tales to tell.

I met, for example, the ruler of a little mountain state near Georgia, who had been sent here with his officials after his land had been invaded by the Red Army. There were twenty of them altogether; the ruler, his brother, his son, a priest, and a number of generals. Not one of them had ever done a day's work before in his life, and it was amusing to see their scorn of their menial tasks. The ruler, his brother and his son, were kept busy sweeping the yard, cleaning away the snow. As soon as one of the soldiers who

Digitized by Google

were watching turned his back, one of them would usually drop his broom and then pick it up again when the man had turned around. It was his method of protesting against this indignity. None of them could speak a word of Russian except the boy, and soldiers were always trying to convert him to Communism. Later he would tell his royal father and uncle the new ideas that he was learning, until they were speechless with anger. This boy became the mascot of the prison. They dressed him in a uniform, boots and soldier's cap, gave him plenty of food, and allowed him to go wherever he wanted.

I found out that many people were in jail who were utterly ignorant of any reason for being there, and in many cases I am sure that they had been entirely forgotten by the authorities. There seemed to be no system whatever in keeping track of the prisoners. Once we were all called out into the yard and an officer read out a long list of our names. When he came to a name to which no one answered he merely scratched it out and went on. Among them was a woman called Zmern-

Digitized by Google

SYLVIA PANKHURST, THE FAMOUS ENGLISH SUFFRAGIST, A DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS

JOHN REED AS HE APPEARED TO A RUSSIAN ARTIST

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

off, who, I was told by a nurse who stood beside me, had died six months before.

The women prisoners were divided into three classes—those who had the hardest work, such as washing and scrubbing; a second class, who were given sewing and clerical work, while the third class did nothing. This was made up of women who were for the moment in favor with the prison officials. I need not say that the moral conditions of the prison were extremely lax and that the soldiers when they were off guard spent most of their time in the women's section. But the common women, the old, the illiterate and the ugly, were driven about like slaves, for even in prison, Communism divided mankind into the same classes that exist in any other social system—the favored, the less favored and the proletariat.

Although we were allowed a certain amount of liberty outside of our cells, the overcrowding in this prison was even worse than in the other. There were forty-seven men in the room where I was placed, some of whom were Asiatics and whose personal habits were in-

Digitized by Google

describable. All of us slept packed together on straw mattresses on the floor. Our overcoats served as our only covering and the temperature was far below freezing, for the heat of our bodies was all that warmed the air. The nights were a perfect bedlam of noises; coughing, swearing, shouting and singing went on in a half-dozen languages, until the prisoners fell asleep from exhaustion. It was like a madhouse.

There were fourteen Hungarian officers in that room who were being used by the Government as hostages for a number of Communists who had been sentenced to death in Hungary. Besides them, there were a number of other men who had already been sentenced to be shot by the Extraordinary Commission, but who, for some reason or other, had been given twenty years imprisonment instead, although it was obvious that only the strongest man could live through more than two or three of such winters as we were having.

The old chapel of the monastery outside the prison was, of course, never used, but every

Digitized by Google

day or so a new grave was dug in the cemetery, the bodies being taken from the prison hospital, and laid in the frozen earth without ceremony of any kind.

One day my wife told me she had made up her mind if we were not free in a week or so, she would try to kill herself in some way.

"I will not live under these conditions. If I can't be free I want to die."

I told the Commandant of her resolution, but he said that there were hundreds dying throughout Russia every day, and that it would make very little difference to anyone whether she killed herself or not.

That was the beginning of her resolution to go on a hunger strike until we were released, although I protested so bitterly against her decision, and assured her that it would be only a matter of a short time before we were free, so she agreed to wait. Several weeks passed by and we were still in jail, when one day one of Tchicherin's secretaries came to tell me that in a few days our passports would be ready for us so that we could return to the States. We heard nothing more of it, and

Digitized by Google

our next visitor was Madame Balabanova, who told me that John Reed had died that morning, and that she was certain that we were to be released the next day.

Another week passed, and my wife, who managed to secure paper and ink for the purpose, wrote to Tchicherin at the Office of Foreign Affairs. Her letter follows:

"ANDROWIESKI LAGER,
TCHICHERIN,
Commissar of Foreign Affairs.
Saturday, November 13/20.

"Fourteen weeks ago today I was arrested along with my husband. I have never had a hearing of any kind and don't know why I was arrested, or why I am being held as a prisoner. It was my plan to get back to the United States the first of September, to take part in the last campaign, and I expected to have a message from the Third International for our Comrades.

"I have been a paying member of the Socialist Party of the U. S. A. for eighteen years. The greater part of that time I was engaged

Digitized by Google

in active work as lecturer and organizer for the party. I have given my time, my money, and my life to the revolutionary, class-conscious movement. I came here to Russia and brought with me a letter of greeting from the comrades of the U. S. A., signed by our National Secretary, Comrade Otto Bronstetter, also the resolutions passed by a large majority of the Socialist Party, endorsing the Third International and expressing our desire to become a part of it.

"The fifth of August I was arrested with my husband. Everything we owned was taken away from us, and we were separated and locked up in prison. For eight weeks I had no communication with anyone. I tried to get information as to why I was arrested and begged for a hearing, but I could get no answer of any kind. At the end of eight weeks, Friday, October 1st, I was aroused about midnight and made to understand that I was expected to dress and go somewhere. I was taken out and saw my husband for the first time. He said we were free.

"Instead of that we were taken to another

Digitized by Google

prison and have been here ever since. We have been assured by your secretary, Comrade Nortave, who visited the prison Friday, October 15th, that it would be only a few days before we would be sent home, as soon as he could get our passports fixed up. Comrade Balabanova came here the following Sunday and told us that we would be released immediately. This was a month ago and we are still here.

"As a Socialist and a member of the working class, representing the Socialist Party of the United States, I did not expect this treatment at the hands of the Working Class Government of Russia. I can't stand it any longer. It is killing me; I am dying inch by inch. But I have made up my mind I am not going to die in this way. I'll make it short. Next Friday evening, November 19th, I will eat my last meal in prison. If you keep me here and let me die, you will be guilty of killing one of the well-known revolutionary Socialists of America.

"(Signed) JESSIE M. SCHWARTZ."

Digitized by Google

When several days went by with no answer to this letter, my wife began her hunger strike, and five days later was sent to the hospital. But that evening I was summoned by an officer and was taken out to the courtyard where I found my wife, who was being carried by two soldiers. There was an automobile waiting for us, and with an officer and a guard we drove through Moscow. But it was to still another prison we were taken, not to the station. The officials of the prison we had left had been afraid that there would be a sympathetic hunger strike, since there were five other Americans there who said that they would not allow an American woman to die of hunger, and would refuse to eat if she was not immediately released.

This third prison was but a repetition in its misery of the other two. I was put in a room not more than twenty feet square, where there were a dozen members of Kolchak's General Staff who had been captured in Siberia. My wife went with me; one woman among thirteen men. She had become still weaker, although every man in the room kept

Digitized by Google

begging her to eat. I tried to have her placed in a separate room, for it was horrible to see these men who were covered with vermin trying to retain their propriety in the presence of a woman, for in spite of their wretchedness they were all gentlemen. Four days later we were called into the office, and one of the guards had to aid me to carry my wife. I asked for my money, and they refused to give it to me. I asked for a passport and I was refused even that. I told the Commandant that I would not move without it, and at last after a great deal of telephoning and confusion, it was brought to me. We were taken out to a car, driven to a freight train which stood just outside the station. We were free at last, but my wife was so ill, and I myself was so desperate with anxiety and weakness, that it did not seem to matter any longer.

That journey to the Russian border will always stand out in my mind as one of the bitterest experiences of my life. Packed in an ordinary freight car with forty to fifty people, with a temperature outside below zero, I had to sit upright holding my wife's head

Digitized by Google

on my shoulder, for there was no room to lie down. There was a little stove in the middle of the car, which gave out enough heat to keep us alive, but the atmosphere was so thick that it was difficult to breathe.

At every station the door was opened and more peasants carrying bundles forced their way in, pushed up by the soldiers behind them. After the train had been going for a few minutes, the car was searched, and anyone who was found with more than ten pounds of bread, or flour or meat, was deprived of everything he had. It was, of course, mere robbery, for these provisions never reached the authorities but were eaten or sold by the soldiers. Usually they gave a receipt for what they had taken, but how worthless it was was shown by an old peasant who threw his out of the door. He had twenty-five pounds of ham and bacon and a package of bread. When they began to search he tried to escape, for the train was going slowly, but he was called back, protesting bitterly that his family was sick and that he was taking this food home to them.

Digitized by Google

Later, a peasant woman came in carrying a large chicken. One of the soldiers solemnly told her that it was against the law to carry live-stock among human beings and that he would have to take it away from her. At last the hen was forced out of her arms, squawking, and as the woman continued to shout abuse at them, she herself was put out at the next station, about twenty miles from where she had gotten on. But in spite of their troubles, these rough peasants were very kind to us as soon as they saw that my wife was ill. The poor woman was deathly pale and could hardly speak. They gave us some of the bread they had left, and even wanted to cover her with their overcoats, but I refused this because I knew that they were infested with insects.

At last we reached the Esthonian border, and were turned over to an officer at the Yomburg station. There was a quarantine law in effect between Russia and Esthonia, but I begged him not to apply this to us, but to send us to Reval immediately. He was kind enough to telegraph to the Minister of For-

Digitized by Google

eign Affairs, who replied that we were to be sent first class. I cannot describe the feeling of relief when we reached the compartment that was reserved for us on the Reval train. There was no one else in it, and it was actually warm. The attendant brought us tea and milk and white bread, and my wife managed to eat a little, for the first time in eleven days. A little color came back to her face, and I felt suddenly happy again. Our sufferings were over, and my wife was going to live, and we were safe and free at last. I remembered the soldier who had smiled sarcastically at me when I had waved my red necktie at him at the same station on the way into Russia in June.

The rumor spread through the train that there was a sick American woman on board who had been imprisoned in Russia, and several kind-hearted people came to see if they could do anything for us. Crossing the border was like going into another world, a world where there is humanity and kindness, even for a penniless man, for I had not a cent with me.

Digitized by Google

When we arrived in Reval, an Esthonian officer was kind enough to give me money to take a carriage. He helped me carry my wife to it, and we drove straight to the Y. M. C. A., the manager of which, Mr. Gott, had helped us on our previous visit. He was amazed to see us so changed and I tried to give him a brief account of our experiences. He told me not to worry because we had fallen into good hands at last.

"We will take care of you and see that you reach home. You can stay here and rest until you are able to travel," he said.

My wife was put in charge of a nurse, and though she was still very ill, I felt certain that she would improve rapidly with good care and nourishing food. On the next day the Minister of Education of Esthonia sent me a note requesting my presence at the Department of Justice. Although I had not yet recovered my strength, I went to see him, and was asked if I would be willing to deliver a lecture on what Bolshevism means to civilization, but I refused because I was afraid that it would involve my host and the Y. M. C. A.

Digitized by Google

in difficulties, for they were supposed to be in a strictly neutral position. But the newspapers had gotten hold of my story and published the fact that I had escaped with my wife from Russia after great suffering and that I was to deliver a public address describing what I had seen.

A few hours after this account appeared in the papers, the Esthonian representative of the Bolshevist Government sent a message for me to go immediately to the Russian Embassy. I was taken at once to see the Secretary of the Commissar of Finance of Russia, who had been sent to Reval to take charge of diplomatic relations with Esthonia. It is obvious, however, that the work consists far more in an attempt to spread Bolshevist propaganda into Europe than in questions of mere diplomacy.

"I have been robbed of all the money I had —over three thousand dollars," I told this man. "My wife is sick—perhaps she is dying —and I myself am not well. We have worked for years for Socialism and were treated in Russia in the most outrageous way."

"I am not to blame for your arrest, and

Digitized by Google

I am sorry that it happened," he answered. "I have sent a telegram to the Commissar of Foreign Affairs in Moscow and asked him for money to get you home. How much do you want?"

"Five hundred pounds, which is less than was taken from me, but it will get me home."

He wanted me to promise that I would leave Reval that night, for he was evidently frightened of the effect that my story might have on the elaborate Communist propaganda that was being distributed in the city, but I refused to give any promise since it depended on how soon my wife recovered her strength.

When I returned to the Y. M. C. A., after this brief absence, I found her much worse, and two days later she died. The Y. M. C. A. and the American Consul helped me to make arrangements for her burial and were present at the funeral. It was a melancholy and lonely ending to the life of the brilliant young woman who almost thirty years before had left the University of Wisconsin to attend her first Socialist meeting in Chicago.

The shock was so great that I became sick

Digitized by Google

again myself, and for a week lay in bed hardly caring whether I lived or died. Then a little courage came back to me and I got ready for my long journey to the United States. I felt lonely and broken, for the ideals for which I had labored most of my life seemed suddenly to have become utterly useless and even worse than useless.

All of my life, from the early days in Russia when I learned of Nihilism in the army, I had believed in the coming some day of the brotherhood of man, when the present unjust and cruel system should be changed into a new world where every man had equal opportunity and equal rights. Russia has instituted the first government of the toiling masses that the world has ever seen. It has been done in the name of Communism, it is true. Nevertheless, the essential principle seemed almost the same as the things that I had been fighting for, and this first government of the proletariat, this first attempt to erect a Communist state had immediately become a dictatorship, an autocracy that was as cruel and as unjust as any of the most despotic governments in

Digitized by Google

Russian history. Temporarily, at least, Russia had deprived me of my faith and had taken the life of my wife.

I will never forget the last night I spent in Reval. On a bitterly cold night I walked outside the city limits for several miles to the cemetery where Jessie had been buried. I carried a candle and matches with me. I went through the cemetery alone, walking around the graves with the candle in my hand, until I found the raw cut in the frozen earth which marked her resting-place.

I took my hat off and went down on my knees and prayed. "Dear little Mother, you are gone, but I will work for you, for myself and for the world. Everywhere I will try to spread the message of the tyranny of cruelty of the Russian Government that has taken your life."

For a long time I stood there, for it was hard for me to leave my companion of so many years in this desolate and frozen place, thousands of miles from our home. I put a little dust and a few stones from the grave in my pocket, and at last, with a final fare-

Digitized by Google

well, I walked slowly back to the station. There I boarded the train due to leave in a short time, and after a journey of considerable hardship, in which I had to stand up all night, I arrived in Germany where I called on Madame Liebknecht to tell her that the Communist government had killed my wife.

She looked at me with tears in her eyes. I shall never forget what she said. "What will happen to the world now, for we can no longer believe?"

The next day I delivered a lecture at the invitation of the President of the University of Berlin. Shortly afterwards one of the German delegates to the Third International, who had questioned me in Russia about my opinion of Bolshevism, told me that after I had been arrested, the German delegates had gone to see Zinoviev to ask him to release us, and that Zinoviev had told him that we had been sent out of Russia and were on our way to the United States.

After leaving Germany, I went through Belgium and France, and finally reached London, where I spent two weeks. During that

Digitized by Google

time I came into contact with some of the Englishmen who had been to the Moscow Congress. They were delivering addresses on their visit to Russia and had challenged anyone to debate with them on the subject, so I wired them that I would meet them wherever they wished, but though the telegram was read at a public meeting, I never heard from them again, and after delivering several lectures before Socialist bodies, I left England and reached the United States in February. I had been gone nine months, and brief though that time is, to me, when I look back upon it, it is an eternity.

In retrospect the rest of my life seemed as nothing in comparison to these last few months of my return to my native land. My wife and I had gone there with the sincerity of pilgrims, filled with the great hope that we would find in Russia the secret of the future happiness of mankind, and that in spite of its errors we would see the beginning of a new social order of brotherhood and justice, the Utopia of which philosophers had dreamed for centuries. We had hoped to bring back

Digitized by Google

a message to our people in America which would help in the furtherance of the great aim for which we had both labored for years.

Instead, my dear wife had been sacrificed and I was left alone, disillusioned and heartbroken, but with a feeling of bitterness and hatred which will never leave me. A great people, after incredible sufferings, had torn itself free from the chains of an age-old despotism, but it had fallen into a new slavery, more brutal, more intolerant than ever. The knowledge of the extent of this last catastrophe to the Russian people is slowly spreading abroad, and I can only hope that this book will help the Democracy of America to understand the meaning of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," and that it will some day come to the aid of our brothers on the other side of the world.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

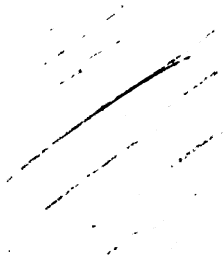
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
3 9015 02131 78
Filmed by Preservation NEH 1991

Digitized by Google